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THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR



CAPT. H.M. HOZIER.

КОНСТАНТИНОПОЛЬ

МОСКВА





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T H E
RUSSO-TURKISH WAR:

INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF THE

RISE AND DECLINE OF THE OTTOMAN POWER,

AND THE

History of the Eastern Question.

EDITED BY

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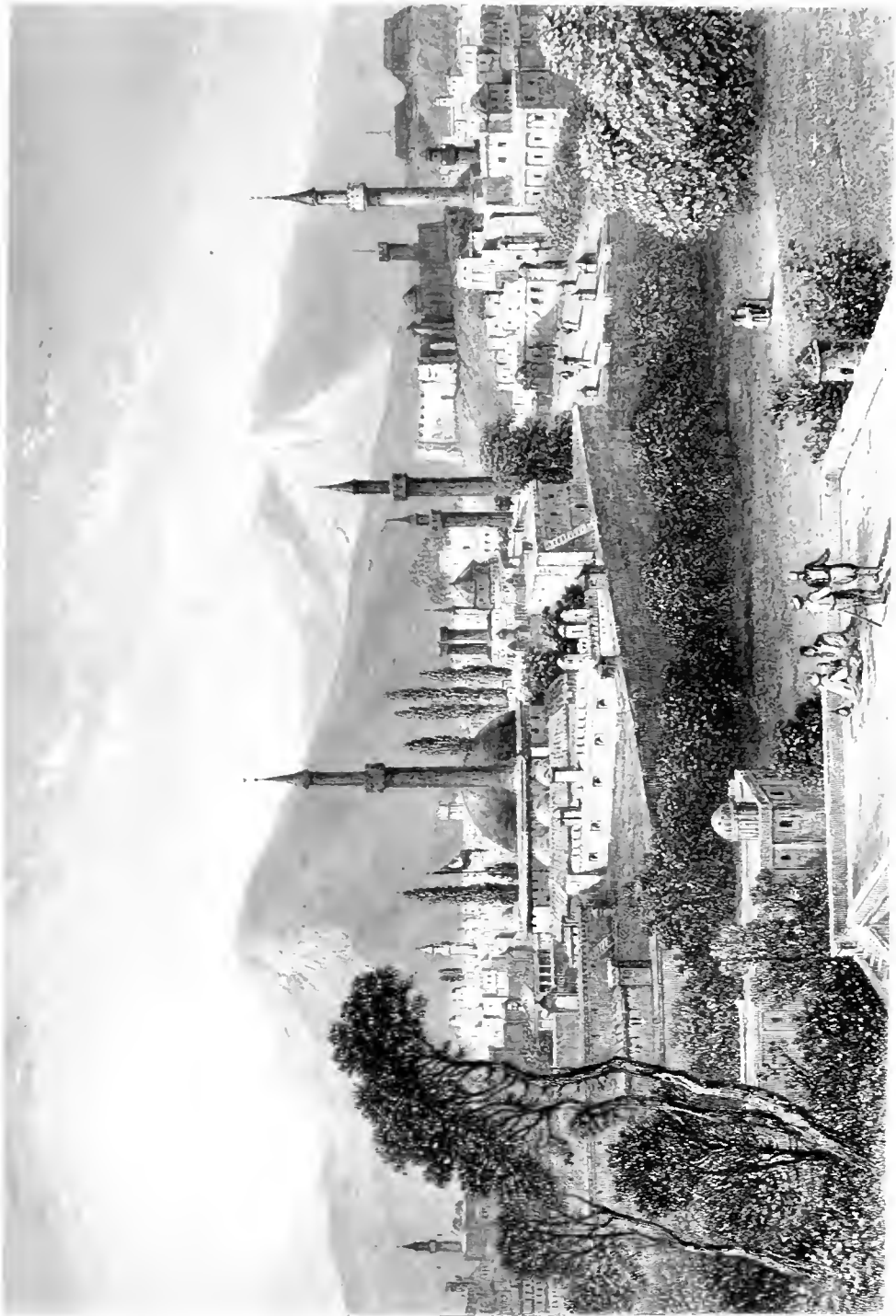






GENERAL COLLEGE

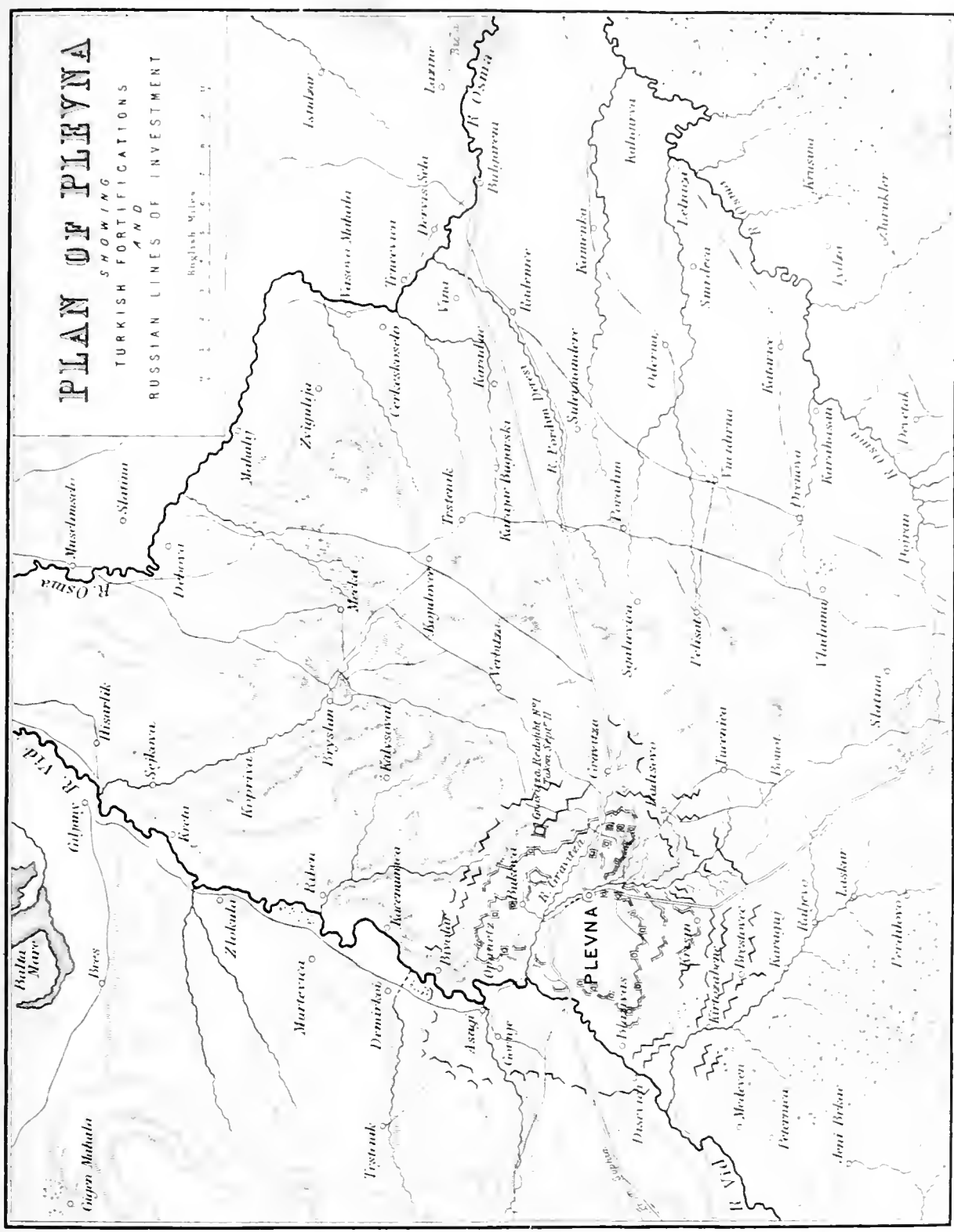




PLAN OF PLEVNA

SHOWING
TURKISH FORTIFICATIONS
AND
RUSSIAN LINES OF INVESTMENT

English Miles 1 2 3 4 5



Scale of English Miles



THE SEAT OF WAR

I N

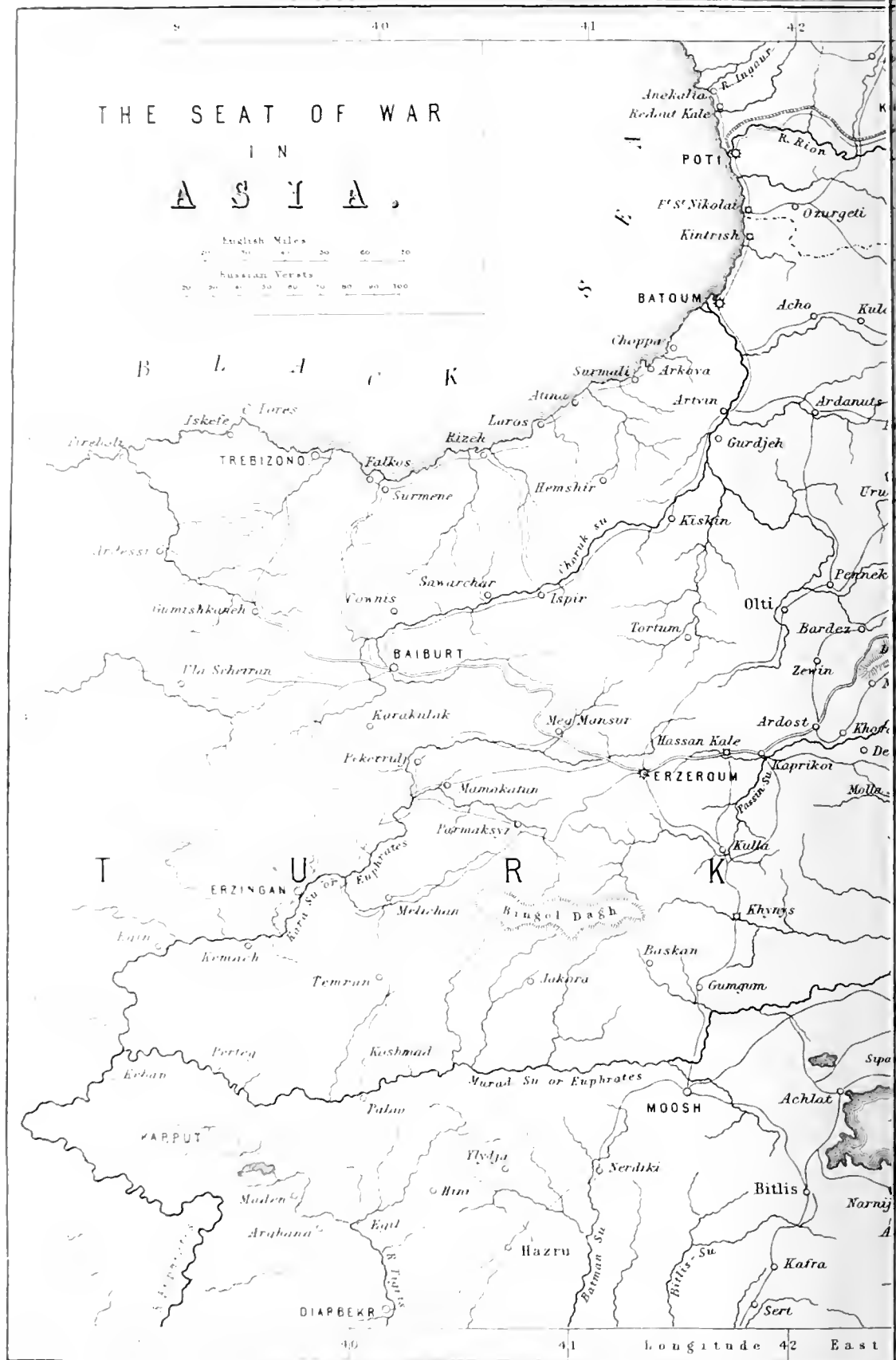
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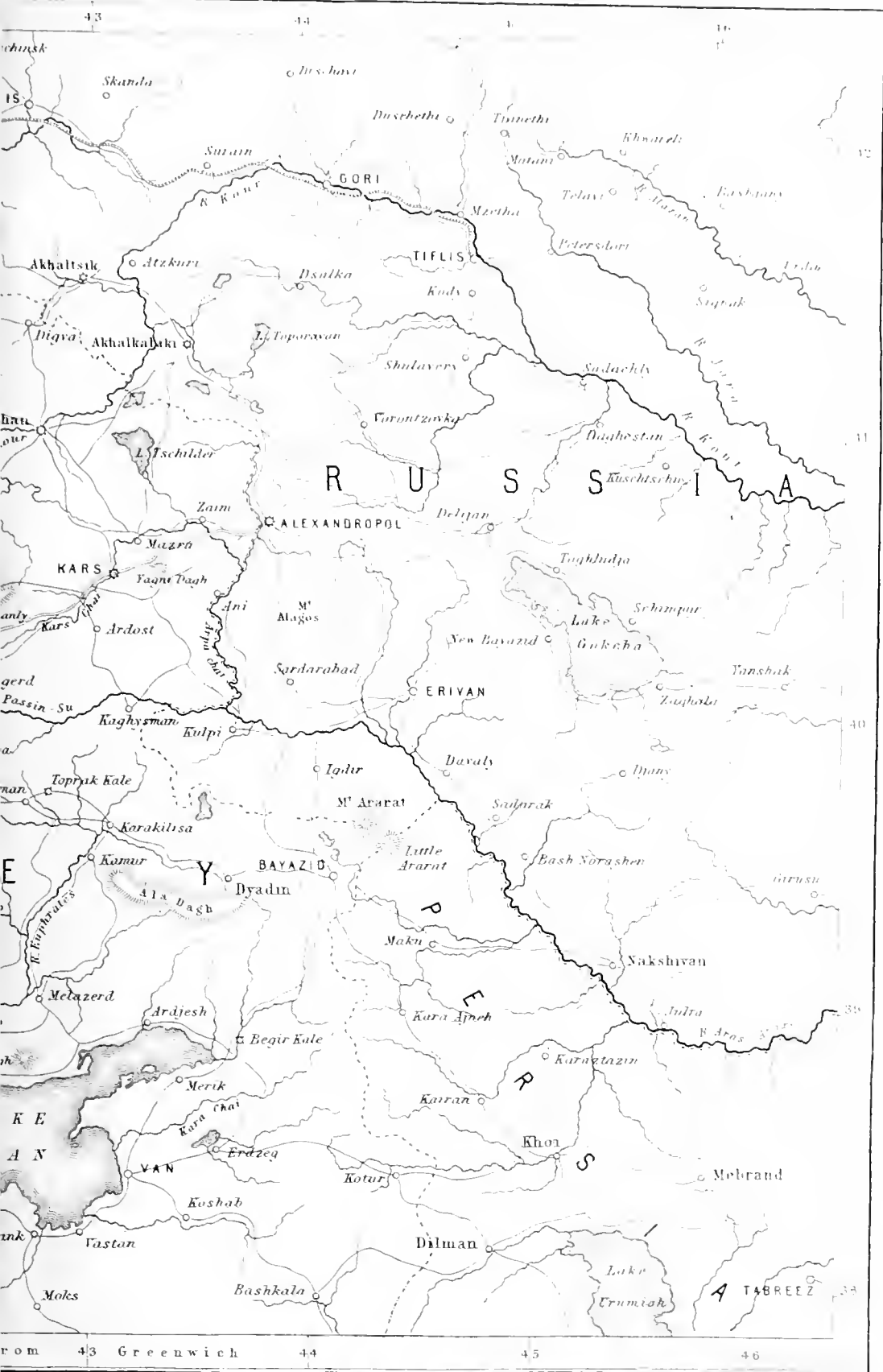
English Miles

20 30 40 50 60 70

Russian Versts

20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100





The dispositions resolved upon by the Council of War, and of which the colonels of all the regiments were informed in the evening, provided that—

1. The extreme right flank (the 9th regiment of lancers, the 9th Don Cossacks, and 2nd Don Cossack battery of the Don—ten squadrons and six guns), commanded by Major-general Loschkaref, should be on the march at six o'clock in the morning, observe the motions of the enemy, and cover the flank.

2. The right flank (31st and 5th Divisions of infantry, less two regiments and two batteries)—eighteen battalions and eighty guns—commanded by Lieutenant-general Veliaminof, should attack the Turkish position on the north of the road, holding in reserve three regiments of the 5th Division of infantry with their artillery.

3. Two squadrons of the 11th regiment of Riga dragoons and a sotnia of the 34th regiment of Don Cossacks, should form the link between the extreme right flank and the right.

4. The left flank (1st brigade of the 30th Division, 1st brigade of the 32nd Division of infantry, and two squadrons of the 11th regiment of Tchougouïef lancers—twelve battalions, two squadrons, and 48 guns), commanded by Lieutenant-general Prince Schachowskoi, should start from Poradim at five o'clock in the morning, and attack the Turkish position between the villages of Grivica and Radisovo.

Two squadrons of the 11th regiment of Tchougouïef lancers were to form the link between the right and left flanks.

5. The extreme left flank (Caucasus brigade—8th battery of Don Cossacks and a horse battery of mountain guns—twelve sotnias and twelve guns), commanded by Major-general Skobelev, should leave Bogot at five o'clock in the morning, and place itself on the line of communications between Plevna and Lovatz—watching especially the latter point. This column was, by the order of General Schachowskoi, reinforced by a battalion (the 3rd) of the 125th Koursk regiment of infantry, and by four guns of the 6th battery of the 32nd Brigade of artillery, under the command of Major Dombrovsky.

The extreme right and the extreme left flanks were, in case opportunity offered, to cross over to the left bank of the Vid and cut off the retreat of the Turks upon Sophia.

6. The general reserves (the 2nd Brigade of the 30th Division of infantry, two squadrons of Riga dragoons, two of the Tchougouïef lancers, and the 18th horse battery—six battalions, four squadrons, and thirty guns), under the direct orders of Lieutenant-general Baron Krudener, were to station themselves—the infantry at Poradim, and the cavalry at Pelisat.

The defect in these dispositions is at once obvious. It was exactly the same mistake as was made on the 20th; and the experience gained in the first defeat was thus thrown away. The two principal columns of attack had too great a distance between them to be able to support each other, and this fault was exaggerated by the absence of a complete understanding between the two generals. It was more than rash to attack the Turks in their strong defensive positions—which they had had ample time to fortify—with forces little more than half as numerous; but if General Krudener was obliged to obey, he certainly ought, as chief in command, to have diminished as much as possible, by his mode of operation, the disadvantages attendant upon his numerical inferiority. Instead of placing themselves at the two extremities of the semi-circle occupied by the Turks in front of Plevna, in such a manner that they could not render each other mutual support, Generals Krudener and Schachowskoi should have kept themselves only a little distance from each other; their movements, then, would have coincided from their being nearer together; the Turks would have been in reality weakened and disconcerted by a simultaneous double attack; and in case of either of the two generals meeting with a reverse, the other would have been able to sustain him. Even had such precautions been taken, and the most united action possible been secured, it is far from probable that success would have attended the Russian attack; but as it was, the very dispositions of the military commanders rendered it a foregone conclusion that the battle which commenced on the morning of the 30th July should be disastrous to Russia, and should add a dark page to the history of the battles in which thousands of brave soldiers have been uselessly sacrificed.

The dispositions of the Turks were more careful, and evinced more foresight, than usual in Turkish precautionary measures, and they were ably conceived. As we have seen, every natural

advantage afforded about Plevna had been turned to account, and the natural deficiencies were compensated by trench-work which was admirably defiladed. Trenches were strengthened by redoubts at convenient points. There were three lines of defence, all in the horse-shoe form; the heels of the shoes being connected by a river, which washed the position, and formed a natural barrier on one side. The area of the battle extended so far beyond the town as to include some of the outlying villages.

When the eventful morning arrived, the weather was unfavourable for operations, and the Russian attack was delayed several hours. In front of the works erected through the forethought of Osman Pasha, the ground was in most parts undulating, on the south as well as the north, and did not admit of the disposition of intrenchments and troops being seen from a distance; so that even when the sky was clear, this could only be ascertained on approaching within range of the guns; but during the greater part of the morning of the 30th the neighbourhood of Plevna was covered with a mist so thick, that the configuration of the ground could only be distinguished with great difficulty, and the Russians were only able to determine the positions of the Turks by slow degrees.

The right column approached the Turkish lines about seven o'clock in the morning, formed in the following manner: in line of battle, the 1st brigade of the 31st Division of infantry, with three batteries (six battalions and twenty-four guns); behind this, in reserve, the 123rd regiment of Kozlof infantry, with two batteries (three battalions and sixteen guns). These troops were placed under the command of Major-general Békopytov.

Later in the day, about ten o'clock, the three regiments of the 5th Division of infantry and five batteries (nine battalions and forty guns), under the command of Lieutenant-general Schilder-Schuldner, came up and stationed themselves in reserve behind these forces.

At a quarter past eight o'clock the Turks fired the first cannon. The Russian batteries replied immediately, firing towards where they judged the enemy's positions were, for the fog prevented their seeing on the front beyond a large ravine, which was covered with brushwood and occupied on the opposite side by some Turkish sharpshooters and two guns. It was not until nine o'clock that the great redoubt became distinguishable; and then the artillery at once concentrated all their fire upon

it. Two batteries of the 5th brigade of artillery were also brought forward to reinforce the three which had been in position from the commencement of the affair. The Russians thus had on their right flank forty pieces of artillery in line—this being the largest number which the nature of the ground allowed to be placed. The artillery duel lasted from a quarter past eight in the morning until nearly three in the afternoon.

The troops of General Schachowskoi were put in line a little sooner than those on the right flank, and the attack on Radisovo and the positions in rear of this village commenced at six o'clock with a well-supported fire of artillery. General Beschofsky, chief of the Prince's staff, placed some batteries in position on the height which, on the Russians' side, dominated the valley of the Vid and the village of Radisovo. The village appeared to be going to oppose a determined resistance; but it was especially in the rear of the furthest houses, on the side of a ridge which separated Radisovo from Plevna, that some lines of intrenchment furnished with cannon opened a threatening fire. The Turkish artillery responded to the fire of the Russians, and for three hours the shells exchanged between the batteries of the two armies passed over Radisovo; at last, at nine o'clock, General Beschofsky sent orders to a column of infantry to advance in the direction of the village. While the artillery was firing, these troops had remained behind the height, the soldiers lying down on the ground to avoid as well as they could the shells which fell in the midst of their lines. Directly the order to march was transmitted to them, they sprung up quickly, passed between the Russian batteries, which since dawn had prepared the way for them, descended the slope of the hill, and approached Radisovo. General Schachowskoi expected to encounter great resistance there; but it was found that the village was only occupied by a handful of Bashi-bazonks, who stood bravely to their posts and were speedily bayoneted. The capture of the village was thus comparatively easy. The inhabitants had not withdrawn, and the Russian soldiers, when they occupied the position, found the villagers collected in bewildered groups before their houses, while children played unconcernedly about, with little misgiving as to danger, although Turkish shells every now and then came crashing into the place.

With his natural impetuosity, Prince Schachowskoi had desired to immediately push forward

his troops, carried away by the enthusiasm of a first success; but as General Krudener showed no signs of engaging his forces, he contented himself for the time with continuing the artillery fight with the Turkish positions. He deployed in front of Radisovo on the heights situated to the north-east of this village the 1st brigade of 32nd Infantry Division (less the 3rd Battalion of the Koursk regiment and four guns of the 6th battery of the 32nd Artillery Brigade, sent to General Skobelev), and placed in reserve on the road from Sgalievica to Radisovo the 1st brigade of the 30th Infantry Division. Later on, when the artillery fight had shown that the most advantageous point of attack was the right of the enemy, this reserve was sent to Radisovo, and established about three-quarters of a mile to the south of the town. From ten o'clock till half-past two nothing but the thunder of artillery was heard on the right and left flanks; not a musket was fired. At the first discharge from the Turkish guns, Colonel Sarantchev, commander of the Rylsk regiment of infantry, had his horse killed under him, and he himself had his leg severely bruised; while three Russian cannon were dismounted in one battery, which had to be replaced by another from the reserve. On their side the Turks had two batteries silenced, and one of their works very seriously damaged.

The extreme right flank took no part in these preliminaries of the battle, and remained inactive until the end of the day; but on the extreme left flank the brilliant General Skobelev was actively engaged. Favoured by the mist, he advanced, without being noticed by the Turks of Bogot, to the village of Krisin, where he left Colonel Toutolmine with eight sotnias and eight cannon in a very advantageous position which had been chosen beforehand, and from which it was easy to watch and repulse an enemy on the side of Lovatz. He himself advanced with an advance-guard, formed of two sotnias of Kouban Cossacks and four pieces of artillery of the Don Cossacks, to a distance of 600 yards from the outskirts of Plevna. From there he perceived about 15,000 infantry massed in reserve between the heights of Grivica and the town; behind, on the road from Plevna to Sophia, the cavalry were stationed. When the troops of Prince Schachowskoi opened fire, General Skobelev did so likewise with his four pieces. The Turks immediately responded with six cannon, and afterwards rapidly increasing the fire of their artillery,

they threw forward all their infantry, protected on its front by a thick screen of sharpshooters and in flank by a body of cavalry. In presence of so determined an attack General Skobelev withdrew his advance-guard to the principal position at Krisin, taking, at the same time, measures to cover his rear and flanks, and to insure his communications with the other troops. Some volunteers were also sent to look for a ford across the Vid, in case he should have to fall upon the Sophia road. Afterwards, leaving at Krisin three sotnias and twelve cannon to protect his rear on the Lovatz side, he determined to march to meet the Turkish infantry with the rest of his small detachment (one battalion, four sotnias, and four pieces of artillery), in order to prevent their seizing an important height which commanded the country to the south of Plevna. Masters of this height, the Turks would have been able to have fallen upon Prince Schachowskoi's flank. General Skobelev sent forward at first the 3rd company of tirailleurs, and a platoon of the 9th company of the Koursk regiment, his four pieces of foot artillery, and two sotnias of the Vladikavkaz regiment. The 3rd company advanced, singing as they went—in spite of a murderous fire—up to the dominating height (the last before Plevna), and under a cross fire of artillery and infantry sprung forward with the bayonet. At the same time the two sotnias charged the enemy's flank. The Turkish cavalry fell upon the Cossacks, but were repulsed; and although the attack was renewed several times, each time they were overthrown and driven back. From ten o'clock in the morning to four in the afternoon the struggle continued on the height, the bayonet being frequently used. General Skobelev, however, did not reinforce the gallant company who were thus hardly pressed, but kept the remainder of his force in reserve; having in view the principal object of his column, which was to keep back the enemy in the event of their showing themselves on the Lovatz side.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, when General Skobelev was informed that Prince Schachowskoi had taken the offensive, and being assured that no attack was to be apprehended on the Lovatz side, he at last decided to engage the three fresh companies which remained to him, leaving the last platoon to guard the flag. It was quite time; weakened by six hours' fighting, the handful

of men which defended the height gave way at last under the overwhelming forces of the enemy. When the three other companies of the Koursk regiment entered into line the Turks were not more than twenty yards from the four pieces of Lieutenant Prokhorovitch, who was struggling bravely under a shower of balls against several Turkish batteries. Prodigies of valour were performed on both sides. The three companies hurled themselves with the bayonet on the enemy, overthrew them by this unexpected attack, and pursued them as far as the suburbs of the town. But arrived there, a cross-fire directed at them by some fresh troops, and a rain of grape shot, obliged them to fall back on their battery, which continued to struggle against the superiority of the Turkish artillery.

The battalion of the Koursk regiment reformed in the shelter of an embankment on the Lovatz road, and with the aid of the four guns under Lieutenant Prokhorovitch, kept the Turks in check for two hours. It was not until after nightfall that General Skobelev led back these heroic troops. Although the ground was not fitted for cavalry, he was obliged to cover their retreat with some Caucasus Cossacks, for there were no other troops at hand. These once more repulsed the Turks, and so gained time for the wounded to be taken up and the battalion to fall back on Krisin. At that place, at ten o'clock at night, an order was received from General Schachowskoi to fall back on Bogot and Pelisat.

The weak column on the extreme left thus fought for twelve hours against forces eight times their number. By drawing off in this way a portion of the Turkish right it greatly assisted General Schachowskoi, and it was only owing to its operations that his troops were saved from a dangerous flank attack. The merit of this was due entirely to Skobelev, who, with his instinctive military perception, immediately understood the situation and made the requisite dispositions; and who also, by his calmness and presence of mind under a tremendous fire, and by setting an example of heroic bravery, perfectly electrified his troops, and caused them to perform marvellous deeds of intrepidity. General Skobelev had one horse killed and another wounded under him. When the time came for the retreat he coolly alighted from his horse, put his sword in its scabbard, and marched along last, accompanied by Colonel Parensof of

the staff, who had not left him during the whole day.

Resuming our narrative of the proceedings of the main force under Prince Schachowskoi's command, we may here fittingly acknowledge our indebtedness for many of the details of this engagement to the Russian official accounts of the battle—which certainly did not err on the side of attempting to extenuate the reverse they sustained—and also to the very graphic reports contributed by Mr. Archibald Forbes to the *Daily News*.

When two o'clock arrived the artillery duel between the Turks and Schachowskoi's column still continued. On the extreme flank there had been contact, as we have just seen, between Skobelev's handful of men and the Turks, but Krudener as yet appeared to have gained little if any ground; the main battle seemed still far off, although it depended upon his co-operation; and Schachowskoi, now at comparatively close quarters, and within striking distance, could with difficulty restrain his impatience to attack.

From Radisovo it was easy to perceive the intrenchments raised by the Turks in the rear of this village, on the height which separated it from Plevna, and it was impossible to mistake their formidable character. There was first a covered trench, the slope of which, sufficiently elevated (300 feet) above the last houses of Radisovo, sheltered a line of sharpshooters. Behind this trench, at a certain distance, a second position, very strongly established, with slope, bank, and ditch, protected dense masses of Turks. The most considerable of these works had received from the Russians the designation of works No. 4, No. 5, and No. 6. It was across these obstacles that the Russian commander was eager to open a passage. In the distance beyond these defences were seen, in the midst of a circle of verdure, the roofs and churches of Plevna shining in the sun. It seemed as though a brief gallop would take one into the heart of the place; and yet what terrible hours were to be passed before this short distance could be traversed!

At length General Schachowskoi, entirely losing the correct view of the strategic position in which he found himself, determined to attack the Turkish intrenchments single-handed without further delay, and sent General Krudener a message stating that he was going to take the offensive. He repaired with his staff to the height above Radisovo to ascertain whether the artillery had

sufficiently prepared the way for infantry to act. Scarcely had he appeared there than the Turks, seemingly divining his presence, swept the ridge with a perfect storm of shells, from which the little group were only saved by precipitately dismounting. A long and anxious inspection seemed to satisfy Schachowskoi and the chief of his staff that the time had come when the infantry could strike with effect, and the rash project was at once resolved upon. With two brigades only, one of which was in reserve, General Schachowskoi was going to attack intrenchments behind which were posted masses of troops three or four times superior in number—and that, too, when the attacking party, the less numerous of the two, would have to advance without cover against an army well intrenched and skilfully protected, and whose works, moreover, seemed no whit the worse for all the preliminary artillery fire. All the faults ascribed to General Krudener are not to be compared to this single error of Schachowskoi, which was a piece of folly only to be attributed to his impulsive nature and his proverbial temerity.

To the infantry, who had all the tedious morning been lying in the Radisovo valley, the order was indeed welcome. They had been chafing at their inaction; and hailing the order now given with joyful cheers, the battalions, with a swift swinging step, streamed forward through the glen and up the steep slope behind, marching in company columns, the rifle companies leading. The artillery had heralded this movement with increased rapidity of fire, which was maintained to cover and aid the infantry when the latter had crossed the crest and were descending the slope, and crossing the intervening valley to the assault of the Turkish position. Just before reaching the crest the battalions deployed into line at the double, and crossed it in this formation, breaking to pass through the intervals between the guns beyond. The Turkish shells whistled through them as they advanced in line, and the men were already down in numbers; but the long undulating line tramped steadily over the stubbles, and crashed through the undergrowth on the descent before them. No skirmishing line was thrown out in advance. The fighting line remained the formation for a time, till what with impatience and what with men falling it broke into a ragged spray of humanity, and surged on swiftly, loosely, and with no close cohesion. The supports were close up,

and ran up into fighting line independently and eagerly. It was a veritable chase of fighting men impelled by a burning desire to get forward and come to close quarters with the enemy firing at them from behind the shelter of an epaulement.

Presently all along the face of the advancing infantry burst forth flaring volleys of musketry fire. The jagged line sprang onward through the maize fields, gradually assuming a concave shape. The Turkish position was neared. The roll of rifle fire was incessant, yet dominated by the fiercer and louder turmoil of the artillery above. The ammunition waggons galloped up to the cannon with fresh fuel for the fire, and the guns redoubled the energy of their firing. The crackle of the musketry fire rose into a sharp peal, while the clamour of the hurrahs of the fighting men were borne back on the breeze, making the blood tingle with the excitement of the fray. A village was blazing on the left, as the fell fury of the battle entered on its maddest paroxysm. The supports that had remained behind, lying just under the crest of the slope, were pushed forward over the brow of the hill. The wounded began to trickle back over the ridge, the dead and the more severely wounded lay where they had fallen, in the stubbles and amid the maize. The living wave of fighting men poured over them ever on and on.

The Russian gunners stood to their work with a will. On the shell-swept ridge where they were posted the Turkish cannon fire began to waver, and more supports streamed down with a louder cheer into the Russian fighting line.

Suddenly the disconnected men were together, the officers signalling for the concentration by the waving of their swords; the distance was now about 100 yards. There was a wild rush, headed by the Colonel of one of the regiments of the 32nd Division. The Turks in the shelter trench held their ground, and fired steadily, and with terrible effect, into the advancing forces. The Colonel's horse went down; but the Colonel was on his feet in a second, and waving his sword, led his men forward on foot. But only for a few paces; he staggered and fell, mortally wounded.

Loud rose the sound of wrath, half howl, half yell, with which his men, bayonet at the charge, rushed on to avenge him. They were over the parapet and shelter trench, and in among the Turks like an avalanche. Not many Moslems got

a chance to run away from the gleaming bayonets, swayed by muscular Russian arms. The outer edge of the first position was won, and the Russians pressed on, despising cover, and giving and taking fire out in the open. They disdained to utilize against the main position the cover afforded by the parapet of the shelter trench, but pushed on in broken order up the bare slope. In places they hung a little, for the infantry fire from the Turks was very deadly, and the slope was strewn with the fallen dead and wounded; but for the most part they advanced nimbly enough. Yet it took them half an hour from the shelter trench before they again converged and made their final rush at the main earthwork.

This time the Turks did not wait for the bayonet points; but with one final volley abandoned the work, their huddled mass in the gardens and vineyard behind the position cramming the narrow track between the trees, to gain the shelter of their batteries in the rear of the second position. The Rylsk regiment, led by its Lieutenant-colonel, Kaménogradsky, gained possession of the work No. 4, and a few seconds later Colonel Rakouza, at the head of the Koursk regiment, became master of No. 5. Besides the extremely heavy fire of the batteries in front, these regiments suffered heavy losses from the flank fire of battery No. 6 and the Turkish skirmishers, who swarmed among the vines in its neighbourhood. The Turks succeeded in carrying off ten of the guns from the work No. 4, but two others fell into the hands of the Russians.

So fell the first position of the Turks. Being a village, it afforded ample cover, and Schachowskoi would have acted wisely had he been content to hold it and strengthen it till Krudener, on his right, should have carried the Grivica earthwork, and come up in line with him. But, alas for his men! he was tempted to yet further rashness.

Just under the town the Turks had established a formidable redoubt and strongly armed it with cannon. The first position, in natural as in artificial strength, was child's play to the grim starkness of this second one on that isolated mamelon, with the batteries on the swell behind it. But Schachowskoi determined to attack it, and his troops were not the men to balk him. At four p.m. he sent an order to the extreme left to support his movement, and again threw forward his troops.

The first rush, however, was out of them.

Many were exhausted, and hung a good deal in the advance, exposing themselves recklessly, and falling fast, but not progressing with much speed. Schachowskoi kept his finger well on the throbbing pulse of battle. Just in the nick of time the Schonia regiment, half his reserve brigade, was thrown into the fight, while the other half took part in the attack more on the left flank. It was a desperate step, and had the army opposed to him been other than Turks it might easily have led to the annihilation of his whole force. The news he had just received, that Krudener had sent a regiment and a battery as reinforcement, no doubt emboldened Schachowskoi to take this dangerous step; but as a matter of fact these reinforcements missed their way, and only appeared when too late.

The new blood of the reserves told at once. There was a move forward, and no more standing and craning over the fence. The Rylsk and Koursk regiments advanced along a small hollow in the ground up to the mills situated in front of the town. In a short time the Russians, led on by their officers, made such a furious attempt that they gained an entrance into the redoubt. Osman Pasha, however, who had inexhaustible reserves at his disposal, hurled against them masses of fresh troops, and they were dislodged. Then Prince Schachowskoi encroached upon the last regiment he had remaining in reserve, and the left flank returned to the charge, again drove back the Turks, and placed two companies near the mills in strong positions.

As a matter of fact, the Russians occupied the second position of the Turks, but never held it. It was all but empty for a long time, and continuous fighting took place about its flanks. About six o'clock the Turks pressed forward a heavy mass of infantry for its recapture. Schachowskoi took a bold step, sending two batteries down into the first position he had taken, to keep them in check. But the Turks were not to be denied, and in spite of the most determined fighting of the Russians, they re-occupied their second position before seven. The 1st brigade of the 25th Division had early inclined to the left, where the towers and houses of Plevna were visible. It was rash, for the brigade was exposing its right flank to the Turkish cannon astride of the ridge; but the goal of Plevna was a keen temptation. There was no thoroughfare, however. They would not give up, and they could not succeed. They charged again and

again; and when they could charge no more from sheer fatigue, they stood and died, for they would not retire. The reserves came up, but only to swell the slaughter. And then the ammunition failed, for the carts had been left far behind, and all hopes failed the most sanguine.

Two companies of Russian infantry did indeed work round the right flank of the Turkish works, and get into the town of Plevna, but it was like entering the mouth of hell. On the heights all around the cannon smoke spurted out, and the vineyard in the rear of the town was alive with Turks. They left after a very short visit; and now all hope of success anywhere was dead, nor did a chance offer to make the best of defeat. Schachowskoi had not a man left to cover the retreat, and the Turks struck without stint. They had the upper hand, and were determined to show that they knew how to make the most of it.

They advanced in swarms through the dusk on their original first position, and captured three Russian cannons before the batteries could be withdrawn. The Turkish shells began once more to whistle over the ridge above Radisovo, and fall into the village behind, now crammed with wounded. The streams of wounded wending their painful way over the ridge were incessant. The badly wounded mostly lay where they fell. Later in the darkness a baleful sort of *krankentraeger* swarmed over the battle-field in the shape of Bashi-bazouks, who spared not. Lingered there on the ridge till the moon rose, the staff could hear from below on the still night air the cries of pain, the entreaties for mercy, and the yells of bloodthirsty fanatical triumph. It was indeed an hour to wring the sternest heart.

It is said that at the moment of seeing his soldiers at the gates of Plevna, General Schachowskoi turned towards his officers, and said, "Messieurs, we have our revenge." He was referring to the affair of the 20th, and was evidently by his speaking thus reckoning upon Krudener having advanced from his side, and coming to assist him. But Krudener did not arrive. The old General had failed in his attack, which he had undertaken only because he was dragged into it by his fiery colleague. When Prince Schachowskoi reported that he had set out on his offensive movement on the left flank, at twenty minutes to three in the afternoon, Krudener gave Lieutenant-general Veliaminof, under whose direct command the right

column was placed, the order to also march forward.

General Veliaminof then attacked the great Turkish redoubt of Grivica, with the Penza regiment and two battalions of the Kozlof regiment, under Major-general Belokopytof, on his right, having in reserve the 1st brigade of the 5th Division of infantry; and on his left, the 1st battalion of the Kozlof regiment and the Tambof regiment, which he led to the attack in person, and behind which, on the left, was the Galitz regiment of infantry in reserve.

Advancing with an irresistible rush, the Russian sharpshooters drove back those of the enemy, who retired precipitately. General Belokopytof's troops marched in splendid order, singing as they went. In spite of the terrible fire of the Turks, the 1st battalion of the Penza regiment, which was in front, advanced without a check, and dashing forward with the bayonet, carried a battery, as well as the first line of intrenchments in front of the redoubt; it reached the second line, but was there obliged to stop in face of the Turkish reserves, which were being increased incessantly. The 2nd battalion of the same regiment supported it immediately on its left, drove the Turks from the second line of intrenchments, beat them back from the ravine, climbed the opposite slope close upon their heels, and approached the redoubt itself.

At the head of three companies of sharpshooters Major Kovalevsky, commander of this battalion, drove the enemy out of some advanced trenches, took possession of them, and then, with the 7th company and a portion of the 2nd, sprang upon the parapet of the redoubt, but at its summit he was cut in pieces by the enemy's yataghans. Lieutenant Amosof, in command of the 2nd company, also fell fighting heroically. In spite of desperate charges, the two other battalions of the Penza regiment could not overcome the resistance of the Turks, who, in the words of the Russian official report, directed an infernal fire upon their front and both flanks. It was distressing to see bravery and heroism so uselessly thrown away in this senseless attack. Repulsed at every attempt, the soldiers intrepidly reformed their ranks, in which death had made frightful gaps, and dashed forward afresh. In a few minutes the Penza regiment lost 29 officers and 1006 soldiers; that is to say, more than a half of its officers and a third of its men. In the end

it was absolutely obliged to fall back, the regiment being nothing more than a mob, in which it was impossible to re-establish order owing to the enormous losses it had suffered, and also on account of the want of officers. But the attempts to capture the redoubt were not discontinued on that account. The 2nd battalion, and then the 3rd, of the Kozlof regiment attacked it after the Penza regiment had failed. The commander of the Kozlof regiment, Colonel Stefanoff, led his men quite up to the redoubt, jumped into the ditch, and there fell wounded by three balls. He was taken up dying, but the soldiers did not retreat. Not being able to obtain possession of the redoubt, they established themselves in the ditch, and then commenced a fusillade at close quarters with the enemy. At this moment the 1st brigade of the 5th Division of infantry arrived, led by General Schilder-Schuldner, commander of the Division. After having driven the Turks beyond the ravine, and then from the advanced works, that brigade also charged at the redoubt, but without greater success. The attack from the left side likewise proved unavailing. The Tambof regiment and the 1st battalion of the Kozlof regiment, commanded by General Veliaminof, were received with so murderous a fire that they could not get up to the redoubt; for the men were falling in such numbers that the bodies of the dead and wounded impeded their movements. These troops were not able to reach farther than a hillock near the redoubt, from which they directed a well sustained musketry fire upon the defenders of the fortress. The Galitz regiment also came into line, and formed on the left. Another fresh and energetic attempt at assault was made, but with the same result. Entire ranks were laid low by a single volley from the Turks. In fact, to find another instance of corps being so rapidly destroyed as those which the Russians used here one after another, one must go back to some of the frightful slaughters in the wars of the first French Empire.

These attacks were over about six o'clock. At that time General Krudener only had in reserve the Serpoukhof regiment with a battery, and three squadrons with four pieces of horse artillery. The other regiment (the Kolomna), of the 2nd brigade of the 30th Division, had been sent at four o'clock as a reinforcement to Prince Schachowskoï; and it had proceeded to

the right flank of his troops, but in such a manner that the Prince did not even know it was there, and no use was made of it.

After six o'clock General Krudener drew from the reserves a battalion of the Serpoukhof regiment and a squadron of Riga dragoons, with two pieces of horse artillery, to reinforce the extreme right, which was commencing to retreat, but which, by the aid of these troops, was able to hold its ground. There then remained in the general reserves only two battalions and two squadrons, with two guns.

At sunset the General-in-chief ordered a last attack upon the redoubt to be attempted, after having sent three fresh companies of the Serpoukhof regiment forward as reinforcements. Two more assaults then took place, as desperate and unsuccessful as the preceding ones. On the last occasion the troops were led by General Bojerianof, commander of the 2nd brigade of the 30th Division, who was wounded about a hundred yards from the redoubt. Devotion on the part of the officers, and courage on that of the soldiers, were both useless against the numerical superiority and strong position of the Turks, who were commanded by Emin Bey, one of Osman Pasha's best lieutenants.

Many of the Russian soldiers confessed after the battle that the savage spiritedness of the Turks had made them feel afraid of them. If the attack was madly heroic, the defence certainly was admirable. "The Turks are wild beasts," said the Russian soldiers who had seen them fight; "they throw themselves upon us like tigers, and strike, strike, strike incessantly until we sink. Then they attack the rest, and shower down blow after blow continuously, without their arms ever getting tired."

A very large number of Russians were wounded by bayonet thrusts through the shoulder, a characteristic feature of hand-to-hand struggles fought in trenches, when one adversary occupies the parapet while the other attacks from the ditch. One of them thus related how he had been struck:—"We were scarcely ten paces from the Turks, who rose up immediately before us in the middle of a field of maize. I fired on a Turk, and at the moment when I believed I had killed him he leapt on me, ran me through, then threw himself on my next comrade, who fell like me. He had in this way cut down three of my com-

panions in the twinkling of an eye, before we had time to think. I assure you he was a regular tiger: I was afraid of him." It was by no means the only occasion during this war on which Russian soldiers found their opponents possessed of an energy and fighting capacity of which the "effete Turk" was presumed to have been altogether incapable.

As night closed in, the combat still continued round the redoubt; and the musketry fire and cheers were still heard. It was the last desperate effort of the Russians to capture the key of the position. It seemed at times, when listening to the noise of the firing which became more distant, that their heroic efforts were crowned with success; but this hope was quickly deceived; at the end of a certain time the cannonade redoubled and the musketry fire drew nearer again. In the end the Turks stood victorious, and in possession of all the ground they had occupied when the sun rose upon that day which was to witness such long continued bravery, such fearful carnage, and a result so glorious to the defenders. It was a splendid passage of arms, bringing out the qualities of the troops on both sides to the utmost.

Seeing the uselessness of fresh efforts, especially in the darkness, General Krudener gave orders to commence the retreat, intrusting General Veliaminof with the withdrawal of the troops engaged. To cover the retreat he placed in position—First, a battalion of the Serpoukhof regiment, a squadron of Tehougouïef lanciers and two cannons which remained in reserve; second, the regiment of Galitz infantry, which had suffered least; third, the regiment of Voronége infantry, which had just arrived at Trestenik from Sistova. The baggage was sent to Bulgarenî. The wounded who had been carried away by the ambulance were all dressed and placed on carriages before the retreat, thanks to the coolness and self-denying zeal of the medical staff. Both the latter, however, and the Red Cross Society, found themselves completely unprepared for the frightful carnage of this day. After the first dressing, a large number of wounded were sent direct to Russia, dressed as on the day of the battle; their linen and their clothes all covered with blood and bloody mud. They were seen passing at Braila heaped up in cattle trucks some days after, and many died on the way.

The retreat of Krudener left Prince Schachowskoi, on the height south of Radisovo, abandoned to himself without hope of support, with his troops decimated and foolishly involved in the Turkish lines. With the last rays of the setting sun the Turks could be seen coming out of Plevna like a swarm of ants, and spreading themselves over the fields which had during the day been the theatre of the battle. The remnants of the broken-up regiments, a confused mass of fugitives, escaped in disorder before the Bashi-bazouks. In vain some officers attempted to rally their men, in order to face the enemy who were pressing on them, and to protect at some point a retreat which was assuming the character of an utter rout. It was with difficulty they succeeded in forming a company out of several regiments with which to protect some of the wounded. In the morning General Schachowskoi had been surrounded by a brilliant escort, but a handful of Cossacks now formed his sole guard. During the whole day the General had only taken a piece of biscuit soaked in brandy, and as he now sat on his horse biting his lips, he appeared to be undergoing the most severe mental sufferings. The cries of the wounded, the shouts of the victors, now and then the bursting of a projectile fired at hazard in the air thick with smoke, the lurid light of a burning village, all conspired to make up a picture of mournful grandeur.

Throughout the battle the Turks took no prisoners and gave no quarter. The wounded were despatched, and the soldiers who surrendered themselves were killed. From one end of the battle-field to the other, around the redoubt, and in the vineyards and fields of maize—all was an immense slaughter-house. The cannon which the Russians had mounted above Radisovo were taken. When the Bashi-bazouks re-entered this village they found the houses filled with wounded Russians, whom they massacred without pity.

The total Russian losses amounted to almost a third of their strength. The official reports acknowledged 169 officers and 7136 men, without distinguishing between the dead and the wounded. The proportion of the first would probably have resulted in frightening and demoralizing the troops; for, as we have said, the Turks allowed no quarter, and only a small number of the wounded could be saved in the retreat. Osman Pasha, in his telegraphic report, announced only 100 dead and 300

wounded on his side. Although these numbers were evidently grossly incorrect, there is no doubt that the losses of the Turks were much less than those of their opponents. They fired constantly under cover, while the Russians in attacking were constantly exposed for distances of 600 and 1000 yards to the deadly fire of breech-loading rifles.

Whatever may be thought of the Russian generalship at the battle, the fearful losses sustained showed how well the Russian soldier did his part. Those losses may be safely placed at 8000 in killed and wounded, out of a force of 26,000 actually engaged; that is, a loss of over 30 per cent. The German loss at Gravelotte, the bloodiest battle of the Franco-German war, did not exceed 8 per cent.; and to find a parallel for the Russian losses at Plevna we must look to some of the hardly-fought battles of the American Civil War—Shiloh, Antietam, the Wilderness—with this difference, that the American troops who fought these battles were veterans, while the greater part of the Russians at Plevna had never been under fire before.

One most important fact was made manifest by the battle of Plevna, which it would have been better if the Russians had taken more into account before renewing their attack in September. We refer to the advantage given by modern firearms to raw, undisciplined troops fighting in intrenchments on the defensive. In former days, when only two or three rounds could be fired against a bayonet charge, regular soldiers had an immense advantage over raw, undisciplined troops fighting in even the strongest positions. The rapidity of modern firearms, and the steady shower of bullets that even the rawest troops can pour against a bayonet charge or an assault, put them now nearly on an equality with veterans, so long as they can fight from behind breastworks. This was a fact which the Russians seemed to have left altogether out of account, when they threw their masses against the Turkish intrenchments. With modern firearms brave men, without much discipline or organization, but who are moderately good marksmen, can hold intrenchments against even superior numbers of the best troops in the world, as long as they are only attacked in front. The thing was done more than once, even with old-fashioned muzzle-loaders, and the Turks showed at Plevna how easily it could be done with breech-loaders. And it stands to reason. The knowledge that he

can reload his piece even after his enemy is within twenty paces, will give the rawest recruit a steadiness that can be obtained in no other way; and he is in a very different moral condition from the man who has discharged his weapon, and knows that he cannot reload it again before he is attacked with the bayonet. Then he has other advantages: his enemy arrives, if he arrives at all, with thinned ranks; the men out of breath, after the run of half a mile or perhaps a mile, or a climb up a steep ascent. They cannot fire with the least accuracy running; and even if they stop to fire, their hearts are beating with the violence of their exertions, and their hands are unsteady. They are in a very different condition from men posted in trenches, with steady eyes and hands, and a rest before them upon which to take deliberate aim at an advancing foe. The system of attacks upon even the simplest trenches will probably have to be modified in future wars. Assaults, properly speaking, will have to be abandoned, except in special cases. Where such positions cannot be turned, then the attack will be almost compelled to have recourse to the same methods as the defence. Earth will have to fight earth. The attack will have to approach, keeping as much under cover as the defence. They will have to take advantage of every shelter offered by the nature of the ground; and where the ground does not offer shelter, then shelter must be artificially created. The attack will likewise have to dig trenches—narrow, shallow ones, a foot or eighteen inches deep—along which they can crawl, and they must keep up a fire as incessant and well-directed as that of the defence. Strategically, they must be working on the offensive, tactically on the defensive; and not till they have arrived within a few yards of the enemy's trenches should they think of trying the bayonet. Their progress must necessarily be slow, but it will be sure, and the loss of life will be moderate. The Russians, for instance, instead of trying to take Plevna in a single day, as they did, if they found that they could not turn the Turkish intrenchments, should have devoted at least a week to it, working gradually up to each position, under cover, day after day, until the last was carried, or abandoned, as would be most likely, by its defenders. This is the only way trenches defended by steady troops—and there are none steadier in trenches than the Turks—can be taken without a frightful loss of life. Artillery is practi-

cally powerless to dislodge troops from deep, narrow trenches, even at the distance of a mile, which is as close as artillery dare approach without having the gunners picked off as fast as they appear; for unless the shells fall exactly in the trench, they hurt nobody, and even then a shell will not hurt more than one man, or at the most two. The difficulty of hitting a trench fifteen inches wide, which in perspective is, at the distance of a mile, almost less than an inch, may easily be imagined. General Concha, at the battle of Abarzuza, shelled the Carlist trenches three days with eighty pieces of artillery at the distance of less than a mile, and inflicted a loss of only eighty men in killed and wounded.

The fact is that the effect of modern artillery, and its value, have been greatly over-estimated. The moral effect of shell fire upon raw troops is of course very great; but its material effect is very slight, and upon good troops its moral effect is of course nearly lost. A shell traversing a thin line of infantry may carry away a man or it may not, but it is rarely that the harm done is greater than that caused by a bullet. A shell exploding in soft ground never does any harm, unless it happens to strike somebody before exploding. The French, in the war with Germany in 1870, made a great deal of the fact that German artillery was so much superior to theirs that they were under the shell fire of the enemy long before their artillery could reply; and yet of the losses sustained by the French in that war, it was found that not more than five per cent. were inflicted by the German artillery, with all its boasted superiority. It would seem as if the artillery used in the wars of Napoleon was a far more effective arm, on the field of battle, than modern artillery with all its improvements. When fifty pieces of cannon, massed into line, belched forth a storm of grape and canister into the enemy's ranks at the distance of 500 yards, the effect must have been very different from that of shells fired at the distance of two or three miles, and smothering themselves in the soft ground without doing anybody any harm. The improvement in small-arms, however, has rendered the old-fashioned artillery quite out of the question, just as it has made cavalry, as cavalry, nearly useless, except for outpost and scouting duty, and rendered bayonet and cavalry charges almost impossible; but our highly improved modern

artillery does not adequately replace the old-fashioned cannon beloved by Napoleon.

It was only on the 31st, at eleven o'clock in the morning, that General Krudener could muster all the remnants of his troops. One regiment, maddened by the fight, and fiercely resolved to hold its position if possible, passed the night at Grivica, almost in the middle of the Turkish positions. The Russian soldiers might perhaps have been able to construct something to protect themselves on their side, but in the Russian companies there are not carried, as in some other armies, the pick and shovel on the knapsack of the soldier; they are on the carriage, where it is sometimes (as it happened in this case) difficult enough to find them.

Soon after the battle of Plevna the news arrived at the Russian head-quarters of the retreat of General Gourko from Eski Saghra and Yeni Saghra, and the campaign came to a standstill with results as unexpected as they were remarkable. If the Turks began the campaign with a series of blunders that were simply inexcusable, the Russians brought it thus to a halt with two or three blunders equally grave, equally inexcusable, and from certain points of view almost equally disastrous. The first of these mistakes was the advance of General Gourko beyond Kazanlik with a force utterly inadequate to maintain himself—with the necessary consequence of defeat and retreat. In justice to General Gourko it should, however, be remembered that this movement was made before the battle of Plevna, and that he expected to be almost immediately followed by at least an army corps. He could scarcely have supposed a Russian commander-in-chief, or a Russian chief of staff, or a Russian general, capable of committing mistake number two. This was the neglect to occupy Plevna and Lovatz immediately upon advancing to Tirnova—an error the like of which can only be found in the early stages of the American Civil War, when armies were commanded by lawyers, doctors, merchants, and politicians. Perhaps not even an American civilian general would have committed the mistake of advancing from the Danube to the Philippopolis railway, with an army of 40,000 or 50,000 men on his right flank, without sending more than 200 or 300 Cossacks to protect that flank, or without even sending out a cavalry reconnaissance to find out the exact whereabouts of the army that was

known to be there, and to give timely warning of its approach. The neglect exhibited in this matter by military men was most extraordinary. A glance at the map will show the most unmilitary mind the absolute necessity which existed for the Russians to strongly occupy Plevna when they advanced to Tirnova, and to seize Lovatz before they reached the Passes of the Balkans. The road from Plevna to Lovatz runs parallel to that between Sistova and Gabrova—the main line of the Russian advance; and Lovatz and Plevna command all the roads from Widdin, Sophia, and Nissa—where the Turks were known to have considerable forces—and the possession of these places by the Russians would thus have insured the safety of their right flank and their long line of communications. The necessity of seizing these places was evident to the most casual observer; and yet this measure, rudimentary in its simplicity and necessity, was neglected by the Russian military chiefs until it was too late—with the result of a most sanguinary and disastrous battle, and the loss of 7000 or 8000 of Russia's bravest soldiers as uselessly as if they had been simply led out and shot by their own comrades!

If we only regard the thorough defeat the Russians sustained, and their demoralized condition immediately after the repulse of the 30th July, it seems singular that Osman Pasha should not have promptly followed up his successes. Indeed military critics at the time attached no small blame to the commander of the Turkish army at Plevna, for neglecting to harvest the full fruits of the victory he had gained. Further reflection, however, will, we think, show that Osman Pasha really acted wisely in remaining strictly on the defensive. It would have been an exceedingly hazardous enterprise to have advanced with his forces, destitute, as he was, of train, and utterly unprovided with all the stores and transport which render an army independent of its magazines, either against the Russian bridge-head and its intermediate base of operations at Sistova, or against the rear of the army of the Czarewitch on the river Lom. It cannot, indeed, be denied that the Russian dispositions were so faulty that a vigorous offensive movement undertaken by Osman Pasha, immediately after the defeat suffered by the Russians on the 30th of July, against either Nikopol or Sistova, might have been crowned with success. But, on the other hand, as new troops were con-

stantly pouring in, and as Krudener's Corps was by no means so demoralized as Schachowskoi's, such an isolated and unsupported enterprise might have failed, and a Turkish general could not afford to run the risk. He could only undertake offensive operations when a successful issue was certain. The paucity of his resources made it incumbent upon him to husband his forces with much greater care than a general would who knew that reserves existed to fill up gaps in the ranks of his army as they arose. So long as Osman Pasha could maintain himself in his intrenched position, he remained a standing menace to the Russian army; whereas the moment he left his lines he would run the risk of suffering a defeat which could not fail to be utterly disastrous.

It frequently happens that more commotion is caused by false alarms than by real dangers; but the effect upon the extreme Russian rear of the defeat at Plevna showed very significantly what a disaster a vigorous offensive on the part of the Turks might possibly have led to.

About half-past twelve o'clock on the 31st of July some wounded who were being removed from Bulgareni *via* Sistova announced the retreat, spoke of the considerable losses which had been sustained, and added that, according to rumours, another convoy of wounded had been attacked on the road by Turkish cavalry; that a part of these had been taken prisoners, and that the Turks were advancing behind them. These statements fell in the midst of the mob which all armies draw to their rear—vendors and agents of or for all kinds of productions, Jews, brandy sellers, dealers in booty, receivers of pillaged goods—and produced a great fear amongst them. All at once one of them believed he saw some Turks near Sistova—an illusion of frequent occurrence during the war, and arising from the fact that many of the Cossacks in the service of Russia had almost exactly the same costume as the Circassians on the Turkish side. The cry of "The Turks are coming" was raised, and the population of the town rushed distracted in all directions. The women tore their hair; some of the old men waited sullen and resigned; the more active ran toward the bridges. Some unfortunate Bulgarians, fancying themselves already exposed to the cruel reprisals of the Bashibazouks, went in haste to the Cadi, in order to implore the protection of the Turkish magistrate. The Russian officers assembled at the Konak swore they would

sell their lives dearly, and undertook to kill each other rather than fall alive into the hands of the Turks. A Cossack in a state of drunkenness threw himself on a horse unsaddled, and rode to the bridge shouting, "The Turks are marching on Sistova." The man was immediately arrested, but the commissariat convoy which had crossed the river, and were waiting near the bridge, were thrown into disorder by many inhabitants of Sistova, the host of the camp-followers already referred to, and some Bulgarian cavalry, who crowded upon the bridge, the strength of this crowd being such that it was impossible to stop the fugitives, who were all eager to reach the Roumanian side. Major-general Richter gave orders to some troops to stop immediately, and at any cost—even by force of arms—the crowd which obstructed the bridge. On the north bridge they succeeded promptly; but on the south (which joined the Bulgarian bank to the island of Ada), they were obliged to overturn several carts to bar the approach to the bridge. At this moment news arrived from Major Podgoursky, commander of Sistova, to the effect that the people were victims of a false alarm, and that no Turks were in sight. This news somewhat reassured the crowd who were assembled near the bridge on the Roumanian side. A little while after General Richter himself came to the Bulgarian side, and gave orders to act energetically against the fugitives if necessary. Being assured, however, that the first panic was over, he allowed the empty carriages of the auxiliary train, which were going to Simnitza for their loads, to cross the bridge. The General afterwards went to Sistova, where the efforts and the intelligent orders of Major Podgoursky had already somewhat calmed the population, and re-established order in the town. But the panic was still so great, that if the men themselves consented to remain in the town, they sent their wives and children across the river. While some of the inhabitants were rushing towards the bridge, others threw themselves into boats at Sistova and made for Simnitza. Several accidents thus happened. At Sistova General Richter found all the troops in position around the town. After having inspected them, the General commanded them to remain in position, in order to reassure the population. At one o'clock in the afternoon the panic reached the Roumanian bank, and spread to Simnitza. It was rumoured there that the Turks had seized the

bridge, and that four steamers were transporting troops from the right to the left bank of the river. The whole population fled out of the town. The sick and wounded in the hospital (of whom there were more than 4000) who could get up also fled; every one began to make for the roads to Alexandria, Beia, and Brigadir, and the panic increased everywhere. Some trustworthy Cossacks, with officers, were at once despatched along all the roads for the purpose of restoring confidence—more particularly amongst those who were conveying provisions to the army, and to compel them to pursue their journey in something like order. Little by little calm was re-established. One thing which especially reassured the population was the sight of the troops who remained calmly at their post, and also the measures taken immediately by Major Podgoursky, and the presence of mind of this officer. What would have happened if Osman Pasha at the head of his reserves, a part of which had not been engaged, had issued from Plevna, and managed to drive before him the army of Krudener? Who could have stopped him in the two halting-places which divided him from the bridge of Sistova? What would have been the consequences of an interruption of the communications of the Russian army, if only for a few days? These questions forced themselves upon the attention of every one in Europe, and for some days the most sinister rumours prevailed as to the fate of the Russians.

Fortunately for the Grand-duke Nicholas, Osman Pasha did not leave his intrenchments, and, as we have already remarked, he probably did the best possible thing for Turkey by remaining there. He certainly arrested the victorious progress of the Russians, and detained for months around Plevna a force which would have been amply sufficient for a bold advance upon Adrianople or even upon the Turkish capital.

On the 31st July the corps of Krudener and of Schachowskoi were definitely established in the positions they occupied on the night which preceded their attack. The troops were able to rest there, to recover their strength, to take away their wounded, and to replace their losses in perfect tranquillity; and when the Grand-duke came to visit them some days afterward, the *Invalides Russes* could say of them, "His Imperial Highness found them in so excellent a condition, so perfect in order, with so gay and

martial a spirit, that one would not have believed that they had just been so cruelly tried. After the check at Plevna, the Russian soldiers have proved that they have preserved this distinctive trait, which perhaps more than any other has contributed to their glory, that far from being discouraged and disheartened after a reverse, it renews and redoubles their energy by inspiring them with a still more ardent desire to measure swords again with the enemy."

On the morning of the 31st July a messenger arrived at Tirnova, bearing the unfortunate news that the second attack had been repulsed, and that Krudener had been obliged to retire with tremendous loss. At ten o'clock a Council of War was held at the quarters of the Chief of the general Staff, Nepokoitchisky. The Grand-duke, the chief of his staff, General Lewitzki, Colonel Hasenkampf, and two other officers, were present. It was resolved that the Grand-duke should proceed immediately to Bulgareni, on which Krudener announced he was retiring, and that the head-quarters should be removed to a place to be chosen later on.

The town of Tirnova had already been worked up to a pitch of excitement by fugitives who gave an account of the massacre of Lovatz, where, it was said, 3000 men had been slaughtered by the Bashi-bazouks and regulars. This was by no means assuaged on its becoming known that the head-quarter Staff was just leaving, and when the Grand-duke and his son were seen passing, followed by their Staff. Very soon the columns attached to the head-quarters, the Circassians and the Cossacks of the Guard, the carriages, the forage waggons, and the baggage, filled the narrow streets; and the inhabitants of Tirnova turned out from their houses to ascertain what was happening. When they understood the gravity of the position, a despairing anxiety became visible on all their faces, and shortly after the departure of the head-quarter Staff a veritable panic took possession of the place. No proclamation had been published. The fright was so much the greater, because neither the civil nor military authorities had said anything as to what was the real state of affairs. Every one believed that the Turks were already before the town, and that the Staff had very nearly been surrounded. One fact would have been sufficient to tranquillize the inhabitants, and that was, that a tolerably strong body of troops

still remained; but no pains were taken to make this known. After leaving Tirnova the Russian head-quarters were installed provisionally at Biela, then at Bulgareni, and then at Tchaouchka-Makhala.

In an address on the Russian strategy, delivered before the United Service Institution on November 30, 1877, Mr. Archibald Forbes, the justly celebrated correspondent of the *Daily News*, and to whose narratives we have already acknowledged our indebtedness, thus expressed his opinion on the events recorded in this chapter:—After remarking that he thought Krudener had done his best after capturing Nikopol in sending some cavalry into Plevna, he went on to say:—Osman Pasha, finding himself too late to succour Nikopol, turned aside, drove the Russian cavalry out of Plevna, and sent in his own advance-guard to occupy it. Then Krudener appears to have done what in him lay to avert the misfortune looming, at that time no larger than a man's hand, over the Russian arms. He sent a detachment to re-occupy Plevna, and followed it up by all the strength he could spare—Schilder-Schuldner's brigade. It was the fault, not of Krudener, but of the numerical weakness of the Russian army, that no stronger force was available. Schilder-Schuldner blundered ignominiously, and his brigade was all but annihilated; this, however, was a mere matter of detail, for he was neither strong enough to retake Plevna, nor to hold it against Osman Pasha if he had retaken it. Osman Pasha thus far merited his self-accorded title, that he was at least the temporary saviour of Turkey. But for his occupation of Plevna, which, after all, has ever seemed to me a mere happy chance, it is not easy to doubt that long ere this time the Russians would have been at Adrianople. The Russian conviction that—come what might, sacrifice no matter what—Osman Pasha must be driven out of Plevna, wrecked for them the summer-autumn campaign. I venture to think that this conviction was an error. But the Russian leaders regarded it as imperative that Osman Pasha should be driven out, and that all progress should be arrested until this was done. Krudener was ordered to bring up his whole Corps against Plevna. A division, the 30th, of the 4th Corps, which had been intended for trans-Balkan work, was diverted on Plevna, and Schachowskoi, the general commanding the 11th Corps, was ordered to march one of the brigades of the 32nd

Division—the other was still at Giurgevo—from the remote position of Kosarevac, opposite Osman-Bazar, athwart Bulgaria on Plevna, taking with him also a brigade of his cavalry division. Krudener, as the senior general, had the chief command. There was at his disposal the mass of his own two infantry divisions, the 30th Division, a brigade of the 32nd Division, his own Cavalry Division, a brigade of the 11th Cavalry Division, and Tontolmin's brigade of Circassian Cossacks, and 160 guns. At its full nominal strength of 16,000 men to the infantry division, this force, making a liberal allowance for Krudener's losses at Nikopol, would have been over 65,000 strong; on the basis of 12,000 men to the infantry division, and a proportionate deduction in the other arms, it should have numbered about 45,000; in reality its actual strength was barely 30,000 fighting men. Krudener, from personal inspection, knew the strength of the Turkish positions about Plevna, and could give a shrewd estimate as to the strength of the army holding that position. Much injustice was done to this sound old chief in reference to his share of responsibility for the disaster at Plevna; but the fact is, he had no alternative but to make the attack. His repeated and strenuous remonstrances were peremptorily overruled, he was summarily ordered to attack; he could not resign at such a moment, and he was bound to obey. He did not even hope against hope; he recognized the inevitable too surely. The responsibility for the disaster of Plevna on July 30 must rest on the shoulders of the Commander-in-chief and his advisers. There was hardly any plan of attack. Krudener took the north-eastern face of the horseshoe, Schachowskoi the south-eastern, and the two fell on and doubtless tried their best. It had been arranged that Schachowskoi should not be categorically under the command of Krudener, but that if he saw his opportunity to attack, before doing so he should communicate with the latter and obtain his consent. The accident of position brought Schachowskoi within what he regarded as justifiable striking distance, while Krudener was struggling with the adverse conditions of his section of the area of attack; Schachowskoi threw the compact to the wind, and went in without permission, and virtually without co-operation. It was a terrible error, and might have had ruinous consequences but for Krudener's greater steadiness, and the keeping of

his men in hand, so as to show a decent front after the battle was irretrievably lost. But it was a right gallant error, a forlorn hope style of enterprise; the kind of error for the rarity of which Russian generals may be trusted. At three o'clock Schachowskoi's brigades began to feel infantry fire for the first time in the campaign; at the going down of the summer sun Schachowskoi sent a message to Skobelev, thrilling in its terrible confession, "Extricate yourself as you best can; my companies are coming back five and ten strong!" There was no peculiarity to note in the mode of attack. The artillery was handled independently, and with no lack of enterprise. There was none of the obsolete fatuity of conforming slavishly to the movements of infantry. The batteries early took post in mass in commanding positions, and having the power of concentrating their fire; but I think Prussian gunners would have held that they were retired too early. The rifle company, never extended in skirmishing order, soon lost its advanced position, and got mixed up with the centre company behind it; the advance was rapid, partaking always more of the character of a mob attack than a swarm attack. Every man did the best he could for himself, without reference to his neighbours. The firing began greatly too soon, and without any bugle sound. The scene was that of brave men bent on a common object, but in unmilitary confusion, and if attaining the object at all, doing so at useless sacrifice for want of organization; for want of that well-ordered control, that order of disorder, that well-timed rashness, that equally well-timed caution, that can only come to a body of attacking soldiers by reason of the presence of a sufficiency of good officers, commissioned and non-commissioned. How can you expect fire-discipline from year-old peasant soldiers, whose non-commissioned officers have little if any greater training than themselves, and with a field average of three and a half officers per company of 200 men? . . . After the July battle of Plevna the Russians, with the resources at their disposal, had no alternative but to desist from active prosecution of the war until the strength of Osman Pasha should have been broken. Their honour forbade that he could be ignored; equally was this rendered impossible by his increased strength in proportion to their increased weakness. The condition of the Russians was extremely precarious. Mehemet Ali Pasha

was menacing in force, with a mobile army resting a flank on a fortress, the long attenuated line of their left flank. Osman Pasha might take the offensive any day, and there could be no assured confidence that the army of Zottoff and Krudener could hold its own against him. Reinforcements in any strength were not at hand; during the month of August only six brigades of infantry and a few regiments of cavalry crossed the Danube into Bulgaria. No man can say what would have been the issue if the Turks had boldly taken the offensive in the first week of August. I believe the Russians would have had at least to concentrate round Sistova if Suleiman Pasha, instead of braining his army against the rocks of the Shipka, had crossed the Balkans by the defile of Kazan and the Iron Gate, and joined his forces with those of Mehemet Ali. But the Turks did not move in earnest, and the Russians doggedly held on, adhering even with wonderful pertinacity to the key of their original project—the Shipka Pass. From the 21st to the 26th of August their

grip of that position was very sorely strained. To and fro, from Plevna to Kosarevac, from Kosarevac to Elena, from Elena to the Shipka, from the Shipka back to the left flank, Russian battalions were hurried by forced marches. Want of system, and a certain gasping nervousness of direction, aggravated the troubles of the situation, which at the best was precarious enough. I shall never forget the emphatic exclamation of the Grand-duke Nicholas when on my way through the headquarters after the Shipka fighting of the 25th August. I ventured respectfully to suggest to him that he should treat the positions there as a sort of leviathan picket, and keep an army corps as its defence; three brigades always within hail in and about Gabrova, and one brigade, relieved regularly, on duty on the exposed position. ‘My God,’ he exclaimed, ‘where am I to find an army corps? I have not a spare battalion!’ It is the best tribute to his stout soldierhood that, under conditions so adverse, he hardened his heart and held manfully to his ground.”

CHAPTER XXVI.

A Brilliant Prospect Overclouded—Important Consequences of the Second Russian Defeat at Plevna—Leading Causes of the Russian Reverses—Blind Imitation of the German Military System—Mistake of confining Highest Commands exclusively to Princely Personages—Misleading Character of Asiatic Campaigns—The Turks found to be more formidable than had been supposed—Health of the Russian Army in Bulgaria—Laxity of the Sanitary Arrangements—Breaking out of Dysentery and Typhus—Unwholesome Condition of the Czar's Headquarters—The abominations of Bida—Illness of the Imperial Suite—Transfer of the Czar's Headquarters—Efficiency of the Hospital and Commissariat Services—Complaints as to the Artillery—Shortcomings of the Engineer Service—Second-rate character of the Staff—Bravery of the Troops—General Character of Officers of the Line—System of Promotion—Capacity of the Commanders of Regiments—Inexperience of Russian Generals—Further Russian Mobilizations—Strength of the Imperial Guard—Difficulties of Railway Transport—Construction of a New Line—Sir Henry Havelock, M.P., on the Russian Army—Its Cardinal Faults—Efforts to stimulate Individual Enterprise—Personal Influence of the Emperor—Appreciation of Rewards bestowed—Absence of Drunkenness in the Army—"Ochai" in a Russian Camp—Corporal Punishment an entire Fallacy—Relations between Officers and Soldiers—The Turkish Plan of Operations—Weakness of purely Defensive Tactics—An alternative demonstrated by Russian Reverses—Prolific Supplies of Turkish Reinforcements—Qualities of the Turks as Warriors—Modification of Russian Plans—The Turkish *levée en masse* a reality—Character of the Fighting Material thus procured—Efficiency of Turkish Transport Service—Russian Decree in Bulgaria respecting payment of Taxes—Value of services rendered to Turkey by her Fleet—Roumanian Military Alliance with Russia becomes inevitable—Ill-will of Russians towards the Alliance—Refusal of Roumanians to merge their Individuality—Forbearance brought to a Crisis—An Arrangement arrived at satisfactory to both Parties—The Roumanians speedily engaged—Prince Charles and his Army cross into Bulgaria—Dispersion of Petty Prejudices on the Meeting of the Allied Forces—Delicate Question of Prince Charles' Military Position settled—Arrangement of the various Chief Commands—Proclamations of Prince Charles—Manifesto to the Nation—Stirring Address to the Soldiers—Effect produced at Constantinople by the news of the Turkish Victory at Plevna—The Sultan's Letter of Congratulation to Osman Pasha—Altered State of Feeling in Russia—Determination to Fight to the end—Fears of Diplomatic Interference removed—Effects of the Conscription—Scenes in St. Petersburg and Moscow on the calling out of the Reserves—Political Results of the Battle of Plevna in Austria—Determination to mobilize part of the Austrian Army—Sudden Change in the Position of Affairs—Meeting of the Emperors of Germany and Austria—"The Triple Alliance"—Explanatory Statement by M. Tisza—State of Public Feeling in England in the month of June—Inflammatory Appeals to the Government—Rumours of an intention to ask Parliament for a Vote of Credit—Mr. Gladstone's objections to such a Proceeding—Great Excitement in consequence of the despatch of the British Fleet to Besika Bay—Explanations in the House of Commons—Discussion in the House of Lords on the War—Intense Excitement owing to announcements that the Government had decided on an "Expedition to the East"—Statements in both Houses of Parliament—Great Speech by Mr. Bright—Retrospect of the Crimean War—Previous Panics—Criticism of the Neutrality of the Government—The Russians and Constantinople—The Straits—The Suez Canal—Policy of the Government—The War Party in England—Great Britain and Egypt—England's True Policy—Effect of the news of the Russian Defeat at Plevna in England—Discussions in Parliament prior to its Prorogation—Statement of the Prime Minister as to the Government Policy of Conditional Neutrality—References to the War in the Queen's Speech on the Prorogation of Parliament—Most Important Confidential Communication from the Russian Government to Lord Derby—Russia and Constantinople—The Question of the Straits—Russia and India—The Essential Object of the War—Russian and English Views not Irreconcilable—Terms of Peace to which Russia would agree—Lord Derby's Reply—Mr. Layard's Opinion of the Russian Proposals—Practical Dismemberment and Destruction of the Turkish Empire—Feeling of the Turks, and probable effect of communicating the Terms to them—Prince Gortschakoff decides that Bulgaria must be a Single Province—Further Confidential Conversation between Lord Derby and Count Schouvaloff—Important Despatch from Mr. Layard—The Proposed New Province of Bulgaria—The End of the Ottoman Empire in Europe—Turkey and Treaties—The Interests of the British Empire—Danger of an Outbreak of Mussulman Fanaticism—England and Turkey—Disinclination of the Sultan to listen to any Terms of Peace after the Turkish Success at Plevna—Important Memorandum of the British Government to the Russian Ambassador as to the possible despatch of the Fleet to Constantinople—Statement of the Emperor of Russia as to the Objects of the War, and his Intentions in the Future—His Views of English Policy—Reply of the British Government.

THE battle around Plevna on 30th July wrought a transformation in the Russian position and prospects of a character almost unique in the history of modern warfare. How bright seemed the Russian military future but one short week before! Gourko stretching out his arm almost within striking distance of Adrianople; the Czarewitch waiting but the word from Tirnova to cast a girdle of stalwart soldiers and solid earthworks around Rustchuk; Schachowskoi and Krüdener, in the full expectation of wiping out the slur of

Schilder's failure at Plevna; Zimmermann roving at his will about Eastern Bulgaria, threatening Silistria, sending a reconnaissance in force towards Varna, and within a few marches of giving the hand to the right flank of the army of the Czarewitch, when that army should have invested Rustchuk. One day of hard disastrous fighting, and, lo! the scene changed; the sunshine was overcast by black clouds; the advantages of the Russians seemed to crumble like burnt-out tinder; and the grim question confronted them, whether

their position was not so dangerously compromised as to create disquietude for their mere safety.

The military and political consequences of the Russian defeat were so important, that this second check by Osman Pasha may be almost said to have marked an epoch in European history. Previous to that event the Governments of Europe were still swayed by the belief in the victorious march of the invaders. The Grand-duke was firmly established south of the Danube; Prince Tcherkasski and his secretaries were installed at Timova; General Gourko, with his little band multiplied fivefold or sixfold by public report, was across the Balkans: and the effect of these events was seen in the councils of the various European Powers. The disastrous failure of the second attack on Plevna disappointed expectations which had been almost universally entertained, and a strong reaction of feeling was the natural result. It was considered that Osman Pasha's admirable strategy in seizing Plevna and Lovatz, favoured by luck and Russian mismanagement, and the magnificent valour displayed by the Turkish troops, had splendidly retrieved the Turkish mistakes in not stoutly contesting the passage of the Danube and of the Balkans.

Before proceeding to describe somewhat in detail the most important consequences of the battle, it would seem necessary that we should indicate some of the chief causes of the Russian reverses: for it will be almost universally admitted that, ever since their appearance on the theatre of international movements, the Russians have always shown themselves good soldiers.

The modern science of war begins with the Great Frederick, and it is worthy of note that the first troops who threatened to break completely through his career of conquest were the Russians. When the soldiers of the first French Republic were in the highest state of efficiency and still in the flush of their early enthusiasm, the French Republican generals were repeatedly worsted in the most wonderful of all campaigns, in Switzerland, by the Russians under Suwaroff. The great genius of Napoleon soon prevailed against them as against everybody else; but they learned by experience, first to fight a drawn battle with him, and then to overthrow him with the help of their climate. No country is a good judge of another's military prowess till the latest war between them has been almost forgotten; but assuredly no Englishman would think of deny-

ing high military qualities to our enemies of the Crimean war. What, then, was the explanation of the early misfortunes of the Russians south of the Danube? Notwithstanding their subsequent successes, the facts remain that they received a series of mortifying checks; that operations apparently long planned beforehand were for a while brought to an absolute stand-still; that by their own admission they had to double their calculations as to the number of troops they required to beat down a foe always thought by them to be contemptible; and that the first part of their campaign in Asia had also proved to be a signal, complete, and conspicuous failure. That they had greatly underrated the Turks was plain, but that could not be the whole of the secret of their astonishing ill-success.

Part of the secret, we believe, consisted in their blind imitation, during the few previous years, of the German military system. A portion of this system, we need scarcely say, arose from accidental causes. The arming of the whole nation by distributing it into so many relays of soldiers, and the relatively short service of the young soldiery with the colours, was the fruit, it is well known, of the situation in which Prussia found herself after her defeat at Jena, and of the shifts to which she was put to elude the jealous vigilance of Napoleon. What is essential and not accidental in the Prussian system (which has become the German) is the welcome and trial unceasingly given, ever since 1815, not only to every improvement, but to every suggestion of improvement in military art and science. The Prussians were wise enough not to be led by their successes at the close of the War of Independence, and by their heroic share in the victory of Waterloo, into forgetting that they had incurred their terrible disaster at Jena through excessive military conservatism. Thenceforward, to 1868, they waged a domestic military war against military routine; nothing in armament, organization, or tactics was retained when anything better had been discovered. It was only a small feature of this incessant progress that they had adopted arms of precision before any other nation, and that, also before any other nation, they had devised formations adapted to minimize the destructiveness of these arms in the hands of an enemy. But the Russian imitation of this system appears to have been of the sort shadowed forth in one of those beast fables of which the Russians are so fond. They seem to

have copied literally what was accidental in the German system, and to have adopted what was essential very partially, or not at all. By a new system of service they had brought great multitudes of young soldiers into the field; but their formations were frequently of the old type, and Turkish breechloaders slew whole hecatombs in their crowded columns. And much of what occurred warranted a suspicion that their officers in high command had not yet learned to manage great masses of men. But a more direct cause of their misfortunes was probably their repetition of one peculiarity of German warfare. They confined all the positions of supreme command to princes of the reigning house. Now, there is no reason whatever for supposing that the Russian Grand-dukes had much of the hereditary military genius of the Prussian Royal Family; but, however that may be, we may be sure that their training was altogether different. In Prussia the young Royal officer is placed under the very best military instructors who can be found, and there is no whipping-boy to save him from the consequences of disobedience. But there is no reason to believe that a son of the Russian Royal Family is exposed to any such stern disciplinary regimen. Good teachers he may certainly have; but how far he will obey them will depend on himself. All writers of credit on Russia are agreed that the Oriental element in the Russian character comes most conspicuously into play in the relations of Russians to the ruling dynasty and its members. The homage paid to them is servile, and its effects on them, particularly when they are young, is not the less mischievous because it does not involve any appreciable loss of self-respect to those who render it.

But there was still another cause of the mismanagement of the Russian operations. The Russian officers had undoubtedly drawn false and disastrous inferences from their facile successes in Central Asia. The campaign in Bulgaria up to the battles of Plevna—the rapid advance from the Danube and the dash across the Balkans—was extremely well fitted to the meridian of Bokhara and Khokand. An Anglo-Indian commander might conduct such an operation with the most brilliant success and amid universal applause. There is a proper place for such strategy. India, for instance, would never have been conquered without it, and the Indian

commanders who have occasionally proceeded on a more methodical system have incurred great unpopularity with Indian officers, and not perhaps altogether undeservedly. But that such principles of warfare should succeed requires an enemy badly armed, with little or no tinge of European organization or generalship, not very hearty in the cause for which he fights, and apt to lose first his head and then his spirit after a defeat. Make any of these assumptions false, and there is no more foolish way of making war. In the case of the Turks, they were all more or less false. The armament of the Turkish armies was at least as good as that of the Russians; oftentimes much better. The generalship of the Pashas in command undoubtedly had imperfections. It was somewhat slow and halting, and there was much want of concert between the different commanders; but it was not based, as would have been that of a Turkish general fifty years before, on false and unscientific principles. As for the Turkish soldiers, they were universally admitted to be full of martial enthusiasm, and their common religion served them for a country and a cause. The Russians had, in fact, been fighting exceedingly brave and well-armed men, fairly well-drilled and led, as if they were the ragged household force of some Tartar principality, with rusty cannon and flint muskets for an armament.

That the Turkish army was something altogether different to this will have been clearly seen from our description of it in the earlier portion of this work, as well as from its achievements up to the present phase of the war. The military system of Russia having been also explained in a previous chapter, it will be of some interest here to glance at a few of the characteristics of the Czar's forces as developed up to the period of the war of which we are now treating, viz., from the repulse of the Russians at Plevna, on the 30th July, to the recommencement of the fighting there at the end of August.

As regards the health of the army up to the end of July, many predictions as to the spread of sickness, once the Russians were over the Danube, had been falsified. The health of the troops was exceptionally good, better perhaps than if they were in their barracks in Russia; and this would appear only natural if we consider the generally healthy character of the climate of Bulgaria. The country lies much above the Danube, and rises

higher as it approaches the Balkans. During August, however, while new armies were being poured into Bulgaria from Russia, *via* Roumania, there was a counter-current of Russian soldiers—a stream small at first, but gradually increasing in volume—of sick and wounded, who were being despatched across the Danube, and sent to the hospital stations in Wallachia, or still further into Russia itself. At the very beginning of the campaign the sanitary arrangements of the various Russian camps on either side of the Danube were admirable, and much attention was given by the superior officers to the precise observance of the rules; but whether on account of what was reckoned more important military concerns taking up the attention of camp adjutants, or whether real camp discipline had entirely broken down, certain it was that there had arisen a spirit of carelessness as regards all sanitary rules, and almost everywhere dirt in its most objectionable forms reigned supreme. This unfortunate laxity of discipline in a direction in which it ought to be always strict and severe, came at the very time when the observance of all sanitary precautions should have been more exact than at any time of the year. August in the valley of the Danube is always the hottest month, and in that of 1877 the atmosphere was positively fearful. A plague of flies and mosquitoes covered everything on the low grounds, and the air was tainted with the rotten carcasses of horses and oxen which had died from overwork in the transport service. At every point there was a predisposition for an outbreak of some epidemic. Just at this time of the year maize was nearly ripe, and melons and grapes were approaching maturity; and the soldiers on the march or in camp eagerly picked these up, and ate of them voraciously. The result was a rapid outbreak of dysentery, preceded or followed by fever. Sickness having once set in, it spread with alarming rapidity and assumed various types. Even in the healthy, clear mountain atmosphere of Gabrova typhus broke out, and the ravages of this and gastric fever were very great in the lower and less salubrious plains near the Danube.

Biela was at this time the head-quarters of the Czar, and it might be supposed that here, at all events, sanitary precautions would receive some attention; but judging from a description of this place given by Mr. Archibald Forbes, the able correspondent to whom we have already been

more than once indebted, Biela was by no means a model head-quarters. Prior to the advent of the Russians, the place would seem to have had some pretensions to the picturesque. "Nestled in a narrow valley, along the bottom of which ran a clear gushing stream fed by half a dozen pellucid fountains, and turning as many mills, the spray from whose waterwheels cooled the air, and stimulated nature where it fell—the detached houses, each within its own yard, or "compound" as they would be called in India, were planted on the little flat patches by the water side, or climbed the steep green slopes in picturesque confusion. Except in one place there was no street, and the road wound about, toying with the stream, or circling the farm-yards, or winding round the little green God's-acre, with the humble, half-subterranean church.

"*Laudator temporis acti*. It would not be easy, no, not in Lorraine, where the village street is one huge dunghill; no, not in Roumania, where the hovels are burrows thatched with muck; no, not in Connemara, where the pigs and the children wallow together in the same gutter; no, not in rural Bengal, where the village tank is a liquid abomination—to find a place that can have any pretensions to excel in foulness the Biela of to-day (August, 1877). It is the residence of an empire; it is the head-quarters, too, of evil odours, of horrible miasma, of exhalations which make sick the heart of man. The palace is the abandoned house of a Turkish Bey; its windows, smashed by the Bulgarians, repaired with white paper and oiled silk—a poor place at the best, reduced to dilapidation by the virulent animosities of the Bulgarian population. Its furniture is the camp equipment of his Majesty; its garden is the dining-hall where the mess table is set out under a great marquee; its court-yard boasts the largest and the foulest gutter in the place, and all around soldiers are billeted and horses picketed. Dead horses rot in the lanes on the outside of the fence inclosing the Imperial garden—lanes all but impassable from filth. In the baking heat the place seems almost to ferment and sweat with sheer putrefaction. The once clear stream still flows; but its waters are tainted with the *debris* of camps higher up. Its channel is the general receptacle of the superfluous dirt of Biela; from being a joy, with its wimpling clearness and its pleasant murmur, it is now a common nuisance. Who would

listen for the gurgle of a *cloaca maxima*? In the middle of the town naked soldiers lave themselves in this foul fluid; while their comrades try to cleanse their clothes by steeping them in it. The stone troughs into which the miniature cataracts pour their streams are half filled up with filth. The horse revolts from the stone-girt pool, which once was like a mirror. Around the troughs is a slough of garbage and rottenness. In every farm-yard horses have been standing thick and close, picketed in the same place for weeks in the heat of summer, till the ground is sodden beneath them. In every churchyard soldiers swarm, living after the unclean fashion of the Russian peasant. There is not a drain in the place; dirt lies where it falls, till the heat exhausts its noxious exhalations, and then it crumbles into dust—a dust made up of a thousand abominations, animal and vegetable—which fills our throats, our eyes, our ears, our clothes, clogs in the hair, makes clammy the hands with its nastiness, and makes a man loathe life and himself. The grass of the churchyard is down-trodden, for it is the location of the main quarter-guard, and the foulness of it now prevents the women of the place from visiting the graves of their dead on the Sabbaths and fast-days, as was formerly their wont. There has fallen on Biela more than one of the plagues of Egypt, but the plague of flies is the hardest to endure.” . . .

It is matter of little surprise, after such a description as this, to know that in one day there might sometimes have been counted as many as 400 carts laden with the poor soldiers going towards Bucharest. In 1829 the Russian army was reduced to a few thousands by deadly fevers and plague; and with such a lesson before them, the authorities ought to have insisted on the sanitary arrangements of their camps and outposts being observed to the letter. One and all, the Russian soldiers are fond of bathing, and this they invariably did when a pool or stream offered. Indeed, but for this there is no doubt that sickness would have been much more rife than it was.

The Czar bore all the abominations of Biela without much apparent detriment to health; but the Imperial suite all suffered so severely, that an early opportunity was taken to transfer the headquarters to Gorni Studen.

The Russian hospital service was, as a rule, well organized, and besides the military hospital and ambulance service there was that of the

Russian Red Cross, directed by Prince Scherkosky, and several hospitals maintained by private societies. The sick and the wounded were therefore well cared for, and the mortality was comparatively slight. The commissariat service was also fairly well managed, and there were no complaints among the soldiers of insufficient or bad food.

There were, however, complaints as to the Russian artillery. It was said the guns had not the range that was expected of them, owing either to inherent defects in the guns themselves, or the bad quality of the powder furnished. But the service of the artillery was excellent, and capable of making all that was to be made out of the guns. The horses of both artillery and cavalry were in excellent condition, with the exception of some of the Cossack cavalry, which had been overworked.

The Russian engineer service, with the famous Todleben at its head, was presumed to be almost the best in Europe; but at this time it had done little to justify its reputation. The condition of the roads and bridges used by the Russian army was simply execrable. They were literally left to take care of themselves; and if the Russians had had an ordinary enemy to deal with, they might have met with a disaster from this cause alone. There appeared to be absolutely nobody to look after them. The Russian Staff was, of course, in a great measure responsible for this state of things; and the Russian Staff was very far from being the best in Europe. Everything that depended upon the Staff was done in a careless, slipshod manner that was not to be mistaken. Of the bravery of the troops of the line it is unnecessary to speak, after the heroic deeds we have already recorded.

It may indeed, with truth, be said that the war had so far been one of soldiers—that is, of rank and file. The courage and endurance of the troops engaged, whether Russian or Turkish, had been not simply on a par with, but even beyond most precedents. The enthusiasm on both sides, and the difficulties and dangers with which they had grappled and to which they had cheerfully exposed themselves, probably grew out of the religious sentiment with which both the army of Russia and that of Turkey was inspired. In each case it was associated with lamentable ignorance of facts; in each, alas! it was inflamed by inveterate prejudices; and in each the result was that both

armies believed that they were fighting for God as well as for country. So far as mere military material was concerned, both the Czar and the Sultan may be considered as having been well provided. But modern wars require more than this. The power of machinery needs to be directed by intelligence.

As to the Russian officers of the line, the company officers and heads of regiments were undoubtedly excellent, and compared favourably with officers of similar rank in other continental armies. But the same could not generally be said of the battalion commanders, who were proverbially careless, neglectful, and indifferent. The reason for this difference was obvious, and was more or less the result of a law decreed some few years before the war. By this law company officers were made more dependent on their good conduct for their positions and promotion than formerly, and more than was possible with regard to the heads of battalions. The command of a company might be given to a lieutenant, even when the company had its captain, should the latter show himself incapable or negligent; and as the actual command of a company brought an addition of 500 roubles to the pay, the lieutenants were very anxious to show themselves capable of commanding a company, while the captains who had companies were careful by no neglect of duty to give occasion for losing their commands, and being simply attached to the regiment. Once the captain became a major, however, and received the command of a battalion, the case was different. He then had little to fear and little to hope for. Unless he did something very bad, his battalion could not be taken from him; and unless he had some opportunity to really distinguish himself, or had powerful friends, it was difficult for him to get a regiment. The result was that he generally settled down into an apathetic, indifferent officer, who did his duty and no more, with nothing to look forward to but his retreat and his pension. The commanders of regiments were usually either those officers who had distinguished themselves in the lower grades, and had been promoted for bravery, a brilliant action, or great and undisputed cleverness, superior education and intelligence; or else officers from the Guard, men of good families, with position, education, and fortune—generally a superior class of men. They were not often

either very studious or very much given to consuming the midnight oil—at least for purposes of study; but they were brave, clever, active, and intelligent, with honour and reputation at stake, and taken all in all, a very good class of officers.

The generals, for the most part, were a very different class, especially the older ones. The period of service of the greater part of these dated from before the Crimean War; and although there were many exceptions to this statement, they could not upon the whole be considered a superior or even a moderately good class of men. They were rather below than above the average, and did not compare favourably with the class of younger officers that was growing up under them. The reason for this was partly attributable to the fact, that at the close of the Crimean War the feelings of the Russian people were most intensely excited against the Government and the army, in consequence of the defeat, and the conclusion of what was universally regarded as a disgraceful and dishonourable peace. The violence of this feeling, especially against the army, was so strong that the service became unpopular, and the best and bravest of the officers who had distinguished themselves in the war—the men of good families and those who were capable of profiting by the experience gained, who had become really splendid officers in the stern ordeal of battle—became disgusted and indignant at the treatment they received, resigned their commissions, and retired to private life or embraced civil professions. These were the men who should have been the generals of the present war. When they retired, their places were filled by men of an inferior class, whose want of means prevented their retiring to private life, or whose want of education prevented their adopting a civil profession, or whose want of sensibility made them indifferent to the contumely heaped upon them. Naturally there were among them a few who remained from a sense of duty and a love of their profession. There were others among the younger who had achieved distinction since the Crimean War, either on the field of battle, as Generals Gourko and Skobelev; or by their writings on tactics and strategy, as General Dragmiroff. These, however, were few. Of the sixty or seventy generals of brigade, division and corps commanders, there was not one who had as yet given any proof of extraordinary talents, who

had risen enough above the level of mediocrity to attract attention, who began to show as a figure, still less to whom all eyes were turned as the Russian Von Moltke of the future.

It is true Russia entered upon the war at a time when she was labouring under serious disadvantages as regarded the condition of her military forces; for there had not been sufficient time to develop the arrangements under the new laws of military service enacted in 1872, which were fully described in our chapter on the Russian military system, and which thoroughly changed the whole system both of recruitment and officering.

The new law, as we know, divided the whole standing armies of Russia into two classes in time of peace—viz., the field force and the garrison force; in addition to which were the reserves and the militia, the latter only to be made serve in the case of an actual invasion. The object intended in the creation of a garrison force was the performance of ordinary garrison duty, the instruction of recruits, the breaking in of horses, the providing of non-commissioned officers for the drilling of the men on furlough and the reserves, and the supplying of *cadres* for the formation of regiments. The reserve forces were also to act as a field force, being brigaded together, had their own artillery and supply trains, supplied garrison fortresses and fort artillery, and filled up the gaps in the field forces. The Guards alone had special reserve battalions attached to them for the purpose of keeping that corps always at its full strength. The rate was one battalion of reserves to every regiment, and one battery to each brigade of artillery.

The advantages offered by this system of a garrison force, further supported by an actual reserve, was made apparent during the month of August; for after the serious check at Plevna, when it was proved that the numbers of the army actually in Bulgaria were totally insufficient to carry out the work required of them—and when in consequence the whole of the Guards were despatched from St. Petersburg, as well as the Grenadiers of Moscow, numbering some 12,000, from that city—it was the very simplest matter to raise a whole new corps of Guards from the reserves attached to each regiment, and replace those reserves by picked men drawn from the garrison force.

Military critics seemed disposed to be exceed-

ingly severe on Russia after her losses at Plevna, prophesied a collapse, and insisted on the loss of her military *prestige*. They seemed to have forgotten that, as a matter of fact, it was not much more than a mere corps of observation that was then in Bulgaria—not the whole, or even the greater part of the Russian army. The actual return of the infantry alone of the Czar on the peace footing, during the year 1877, was nearly 400,000. It is a campaign, and a campaign only, which finds out the advantages or disadvantages of the different plans of organization of armies determined on in peace time; so that, bearing in mind the rapidity with which Russia succeeded in building up again its dismembered armies, both in Bulgaria and Asia, and in bringing up sufficient troops in time to meet the quite unexpected emergencies of the campaign, it must be admitted that the Russian Government appeared to have found a system which enabled it to utilize with rapidity the mass of raw material the population of the country placed at its disposal.

In addition to the Guards being sent to the front, large bodies of infantry of the line were also despatched; yet there still remained in Russia the same number of men under arms, perhaps even a few more than were there at the declaration of war.

Now in every battle it is the number of the reserves which enables a general to foresee the issue of a combat, and enables him to deal with the mass actually at his disposition. Has he many? he may act boldly; has he few? he must act cautiously. So it is with the general organization of an army as a whole; and the ultimate success of Russia during this war may be said to have been secured by its ample provision of reserves, which enabled her to place sufficient supplies of troops in the field without detriment to the military demands of her gigantic empire.

As regards the exact number of Russian reinforcements to which we have referred as having been called out, we may observe that, immediately after the first attack on Plevna the Russian Staff appear to have become aware that the prosecution of the war to a successful issue would involve greater sacrifices than they had anticipated, and the following imperial *ukase*, dated Biela the 22nd July, was published in the *Bulletin des Lois*:—

“Considering that a part of the soldiers of the dépôt troops ought to serve as reserves, in order to complete the number of the troops not yet mobilized, and which in consequence can receive no

other destination, we have judged fit, by virtue of article thirty-nine of the regulations on compulsory military service, to order to assemble at the present time 188,600 men at the first call, and to put this summons in operation in the Governments and provinces of Russia in Europe and of the Caucasus, according to the provisions contained in the law above mentioned and that of the militia, as well as conformably with the information which we have received on this subject from the Minister of War."

Some days after, by supreme order, dated 1st August, the population of Bessarabia, on account of the special conditions in which that Government found itself placed, was freed from the obligation of answering to the call proclaimed in the ukase. In consequence, the number of fresh men called out amounted, not to 188,600, but to 185,467 men, on account of the deduction of 3133 men which would have been supplied from Bessarabia. The calling out of the Imperial Guard, however, which took place early in August, very largely increased this number.

The strength of this splendid *corps d'élite* of Russia consisted of three divisions of infantry, to each of which was attached a brigade of field artillery, a brigade of rifles, and three divisions of cavalry. Each division of infantry, again, consisted of two brigades, each brigade comprising two regiments of four battalions each. The brigade of artillery attached to each division bore the same number as this latter, and consisted of six batteries of eight guns each. Of these batteries, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, were armed with 9-pounder, the 4th, 5th, and 6th with 4-pounder guns. The total number of men in each division of infantry of the Guard, including the artillery brigade, the artillery park, and the divisional ambulance, amounted to 20,348; each division being able to place, when its war establishment was complete, 15,360 bayonets and 48 guns in front line. Each division of cavalry comprised two brigades, each formed of two regiments of cavalry, and two horse artillery batteries of six guns. The total number of men in such a division amounted to 4079, and it could place in the field 2499 sabres, and 12 guns. Finally, the brigade of rifles of the Guard consisted of four battalions, numbering in all 3816 men, and placing 3040 bayonets in front line. Altogether, therefore, the Imperial Guard of Russia numbered 77,097 of all ranks and arms of the

service, and, provided that all its units were completed to their full war strength, could place in the field 49,120 bayonets, 7497 sabres, 144 field-pieces, and 36 horse-artillery guns.

The misfortune for the Russians was that their reinforcements, starting from all the provinces of the Empire—some of them most distant from the theatre of war—could only be transported under the most unfavourable conditions as regards rapidity. During the war of 1870 the Germans used five lines of railway continuously. On a line of Central Germany, for several days, as many as 100 trains were despatched in the twenty-four hours. The Germans also had all their material of war in the frontier fortresses. The Russians, on the contrary, had but a single line through Roumania, not very solid, on which they could, at the very most, run only eight trains in the day.

A contract which was signed on the 7th August showed significantly what a change the defeat of Plevna had effected in the hopes and projects of the Russian Staff. Up to that time they had counted upon finishing the war in one campaign; but after that event it became evident that the struggle would be a stubborn one, the duration of which could not be calculated nor the end foreseen. With wise foresight the Grand-duke from that time commenced preparing for another year's campaign, and he resolved upon the construction of a railway from Bender to Galatz, which would allow of supplies being brought into Roumania without change of truck. The line was finished and opened about the middle of November.

Having now pointed out some of the defects of Russian organization which led to its reverses in the field, and the features of the military system by which ultimate success was insured, we may appropriately quote the opinion of Sir Henry Havelock, M.P., who, having been present for a considerable time at the seat of war in Bulgaria, had unusual opportunities of observation. He writes:—"If I were to sum up the cardinal faults of the Russian army in three words, I should say it is the total 'want of initiative.' Something in the Imperial system seems to stifle and kill the power of individual action. And yet in no army in the world are greater pains taken to recognize and stimulate individual enterprise. Crosses, decorations, swords, and sashes of honour are distributed with a lavish hand, and, better still, they are given on the spot, and not, as with us, when the recollection of the

brilliant deed has nearly died away. The Emperor himself is the great and sole fountain of military honour. He watches all personally. The theory is that no act escapes his eye. Certainly to see how his every word and gesture is followed by those around him, he would appear the earthly incarnation of supreme power. And his personal bearing enhances the reward in every case. A generous word, a friendly look, the well-chosen expression of praise to suit the individual, go home to the heart of the recipient as much as the highly-cherished reward itself. Two hundred officers of all ranks breakfast and dine daily at his table. From the youngest to the oldest every eye is fixed on him. Before the meal, in the assembled circle, as the Czar appears, it is seen one day that an aide-de-camp behind him carries a cushion with crosses on it, and perhaps half a dozen sword-knots of honour—the riband of St. George, orange and black—to be worn attached to the sword hilt. Instantly expectation is at its height. The Czar's voice calls the chosen name, all make room for the envied man to pass; he comes blushing and flushed, receives the prize, bends low to kiss the Imperial hand, and retires bowing at every step—a made man for life, the admired and courted of all beholders. Then he has to go through the usual embracing and kissing on both cheeks from his friends. The effect of the system is like magic; it is to concentrate all power and authority absolutely in one centre. The Czar is the earthly Providence of the soldier and officer, as well as the embodiment of the military power and glory of his country. I have seen old officers so overcome with this mark of distinction, that they went about for ten minutes after like children, weeping, with the prized decoration in their hands, showing it round, half dazed. No system can be imagined more calculated to stimulate individual efforts to the utmost. Yet with all this spurring there is something wanting. It is the individuality and the habit of spontaneous action, which only the education and modes of thought of a free people can supply. Whether it be the long-standing taint of serfdom, whether it be too much Imperialism, the initiative is wholly absent. You tell the Russian what to do, and he will spring to it like an obedient child. In a year it never would have occurred to him to do it of himself.

“This is his main and fatal fault. Let us look a little at his virtues. Never in my life have I

seen so quiet, so gentle, so well conducted an army. In 200,000 men I have not come across one drunken man. It is the popular idea in England that the Russian is a hard-drinking, noisy, violent, brutal boor. Never was there a greater fallacy. He is sober to a degree; never have I heard a violent word or seen a blow; he pays scrupulously for all he buys, and lets himself be cheated and fleeced uncomplainingly by the uninteresting Bulgarian whom he is fighting for. His principal drink is tea, which is substituted four times a week for the authorized daily ration of vodka (coarse brandy). The allowance of tea is practically unlimited. Under the private soldier's lowly *tente d'abri*, as under the comfortable marquee of the general officer, the samovar, the everlasting tea urn, is always smoking; and no one who has not experienced the luxury of a tumbler of tea—cups are unknown, though the glass stands always on a saucer—hot, fragrant, of a rich golden colour, with plenty of sugar and a slice of lemon, perhaps a *souppon* of rum—no one who has not gratefully blessed this glorious drink after long miles of a dusty road, or when the water is running in streams down the nape of your neck, or squelching in your boots at every step—no one, I say, who has not drunk “*ochai*” in a Russian camp knows what tea is: as different from the miserable stuff we discolour and spoil with London chalk and water, as champagne is from small beer. This is the universal drink, and right good liquor it is to serve a campaign upon. But this is a digression from the Russian soldier to his drink. May I say that he partakes of the nature of his drink? Always patient, always cheery, his principal amusement is singing in chorus. Round the fire at night, or from an early hour in the afternoon, this singing goes on; always standing, never seated; one man gives the word, and the whole join in the refrain—I cannot call it melody—in fact, it might be called the least bit discordant. But it makes up for that by being incessant, and apparently affords the greatest delight to the performers, who repeat the same notes, and apparently the same words, for hours and hours together in a series of abrupt and long-drawn howls. Whenever a company or a battalion moves, the singers are called to the front. They shuffle out of their places and form a little loose group of fours at the head, and away goes the column, the time being occasionally varied by a few taps on the drum.

Another popular fallacy in England is that the Russian soldier lives in an atmosphere of blows—that the knout and the stick are his only ruling motives. The fact is that nowhere, not even among the Germans, is the soldier managed more entirely by moral means. A word, or even a look, from his officer suffices. He seems to feel a reproof—and it is rarely deserved—as much as an Englishman would a blow. The bulk of the Russian privates are themselves small landowners, and have an interest and a stake in the country accordingly. I never saw more ready or implicit obedience, or more cheerful compliance; and this is not official only, but apparently based on genuine mutual liking and goodwill. Perhaps the officer sometimes forgets, in planning operations, that his men are no longer serfs. I have heard the apparent recklessness of human life thus accounted for; but in all else the relations between officer and soldier could not be happier, even in our own favoured service. Even in time of war the Russian soldier is not liable to corporal punishment for any offence whatever, unless he has by previous bad conduct and by judgment of a court been placed in a degraded or inferior class, one of whose special disadvantages is this liability. This fact—which, I confess, to me was almost incredible at first, so much had preconceived notions got hold of me—I have carefully established by repeated conversation with officers of all ranks.

“With this good material, then, and this manifest goodwill, what causes these continued failures? The fault is not with the men, nor with the regimental officers. But there is no Staff worth speaking of; in our sense of the word the Russian army has no Staff. Doubtless, many of the younger Staff officers are highly instructed and painstaking, but the elder ones are soldiers of the parade-ground only. An impartial critic must speak the truth, however unpleasant it may be. The Generals and the older Staff officers do not seem to have any experience of the elementary rudiments of actual war.”

As we know, the Turkish plan of operations hitherto had chiefly been to occupy fortresses or fortified camps, and act purely on the defensive, in which way they were capable of availing themselves to the utmost of the splendid fighting qualities of their troops. They could play the waiting game better than the Russians. It was now felt that the latter would again attack Plevna

as soon as they received reinforcements; and the Turks hoped by an obstinate resistance, disputing every foot of ground, and covering every square rood with trenches, at least to prolong the war into another campaign, if not, by means of their fortresses, to surround the Russians with a circle of iron, which they might vainly endeavour to break. This defensive war of positions was probably the best they could have adopted. The want of military knowledge among the Turks and the lack of good officers rendered operations in the “open” very doubtful. But put a Turk in a ditch, give him a rifle, a supply of cartridges, a loaf of bread, and a jug of water, and he would remain there a week or a month under the most terrible artillery fire that could be directed against him, without flinching. He could only be dislodged by the bayonet, and with the rapidity of fire of modern arms it was very difficult to reach him with the bayonet, as the Russians found to their cost at Plevna. Had the Turks carried out this plan completely in the Balkans, they might have rendered it so far successful as to inflict such fearful losses on the invaders, in passing that barrier, as to put them beyond the possibility of seriously threatening Adrianople for a considerable time at least. Nevertheless this, although it might retard the end, could not avert it. No army that is compelled to act purely on the defensive, tactically as well as strategically, can ever be victorious in the end. It is destined to be finally beaten, by laws as inevitable and as inexorable as that of gravitation. It is merely a question of time, numbers, and mathematics.

The Russian reverses had, however, clearly demonstrated that one of two things must happen—either a prosecution of the war with immensely increased forces and the most stubborn resolution on the part of Russia, or else the acquiescence of that Power in a failure which would change all its relations to its neighbours. The latter alternative, of course, was considered quite out of the question; and taking for granted that the Russian Government, and still more the Imperial family, were conscious of the absolute necessity of success, and would, if necessary, place their last regiment in the field to secure it, there seemed in prospect one of the most fiercely contested campaigns that Europe had seen. There could be no doubt of the heavy losses sustained by the Russians, and that they had been

inflicted by the Turks in circumstances which gave reason to believe that the result was not fortuitous or dependent on some peculiarity of position that would not be repeated. The first element of success in war, supposing a reasonable equality in other respects to exist between the belligerents, is numbers. The Turkish armies were far more numerous than the Russians expected. At Bucharest and Simnitsa the officers had persuaded themselves that the number of the Sultan's troops in Europe had been immensely exaggerated by rumour or partisanship. They were under the firm impression, even within a few days before the memorable 30th of July, that only 90,000 Turks were to be found in Bulgaria. They were now painfully undeceived. The fact was that the Turkish forces had grown while the Russians had been preparing, and the calculations of January or even of April no longer held good. Every week reinforcements had arrived at Constantinople or Varna, and these levies, though the provinces had been swept bare to furnish them, were now in the field to check, if not to roll back, the tide of invasion. Their spirit was just that which makes a soldier. They left family and friends seemingly without a regret; the home-sickness which commonly depresses the conscripts of Christian armies appeared to be unknown to them; they served with a strange mixture of apathy and devotion, careless of their own lives, thoughtless of those they had left behind. They had, for the most part, an inborn aptitude for the use of arms; and in this they may be said to have been superior to the Russian peasant, who was naturally a plain, quiet creature, who had to be made into a warrior. This accounted for the rapidity with which the Turkish levies learned to use their powerful weapon—the Martini-Peabody rifle—and even to become excellent artillerymen. It was also not difficult for their officers and themselves to practise the simple evolutions which were necessary for such warfare as they had hitherto carried on. The Russians had therefore to reckon with a Turkish army of different degrees of discipline, it was true, but composed of men all physically brave, all with their hearts in the war, or at least indifferent to peace, and all well armed. The number of this host could not at the time be ascertained with accuracy, but there were portentous indications that, in this respect, it was a match for the Russian armies actually available

for the field. The Russians had brought nearly a quarter of a million of men into Roumania; but of these a large part was still delayed by the difficulty of transport, and to this cause also was to be attributed a general heaviness in the Russian movements, which made itself manifest in spite of such exploits as General Gourko's passage of the Balkans.

What the Russians now had to fear was a combination of the three Turkish armies under Osman Pasha, Mehemet Ali, and Suleiman Pasha; and in face of this it was not, therefore, surprising that the Russian commanders reduced their immediate plans within a very moderate compass.

The 8th Corps received orders to fall back and strongly occupy the Selvi position, by which Osman Pasha would have been able to take the Russian army in flank. The troops at Shipka were also restricted to purely defensive operations. The army of the Czarewitch, which was deploying indefinitely towards Osman-Bazar, stopped and fortified itself as strongly as possible. The front was reduced to a line, still very extensive for the effective forces which the Grand-duke had at his disposal, which extended in the form of a horse-shoe from the neighbourhood of Rustchuk to the mouth of the Vid, following the line of the Lom and passing through Elena, Haïnkoi, Shipka, Selvi, Lovatz, and Plevna. The greatest radius of this semicircle not exceeding seventy-five miles, reinforcements could be rapidly brought from one point to another. Then, Tirnova being found to be too far from the centre of so restricted a theatre of operations, the head-quarters were removed to the Danube.

Although reinforcements were rapidly pouring into Bulgaria, there was no disposition to use them at once; and the Grand-duke Nicholas and his advisers finally decided to stop short in their career, without operating beyond the Balkans. Their present object was limited to the defeat of the two Turkish armies which had taken up defensive positions, on the west from Plevna to Lovatz, and on the east from Rasgrad to the neighbourhood of Osman-Bazar, and to the exclusion of Suleiman Pasha's army from the field of strife. It was calculated that the Russians might hope to clear the country north of the Balkans of organized Turkish armies within the next three months. To carry the invasion to the south of the mountain barrier which formed the natural defence of Roumelia,

would, it was feared, have to be the work of another campaign.

If the strategy of Turkish generals was defective, there was no lack of energy on the part of the Turks generally to augment armies in the field, and to supply them with the needful *matériel* of war. If M. Gambetta had visited Turkey just after the battle of Plevna, he might have formed a good idea of what a *levée en masse* really was, and how insignificant were the efforts made by the French in 1870, when compared with those of the Turks in 1877. The last horse in the field, the last peasant in the village, and the last piastre in the money chest, were employed to repel the Russian invasion. The Turkish troops had during twenty months received no regular pay; they were merely lodged and fed by the State, and got, but at the rarest intervals, a few piastres; yet they continued to fight with undiminished zeal, and desertions and insubordination were never heard of amongst the regular troops. A German non-commissioned officer or soldier could hardly do as much under similar circumstances, especially as the food was often very bad. It was common to say the Turkish troops were raw levies fresh from the plough tail; but the notion was very wide of the mark. They were, indeed, in one sense, fresh from the plough, as they were taken chiefly from the agricultural classes, and their conversion from thrifty workers into non-productive consumers was a frightful drain upon the resources of the country. But they had nearly all smelled powder, either in actual warfare or as *Redifs*—the Turkish equivalent for the English militia—while garrisoning towns in the interior. They were very fond, too, of rifle practice on their own account. They came from all parts. Many were advanced in years, the conscription now embracing all under sixty. However, there was a good deal of fighting still left in a Turkish peasant of sixty, owing, in a great measure, to his wonderfully frugal, simple life. They were, moreover, full of religious enthusiasm, devoutly believing that they were doing battle with the Giaour for the preservation of the true faith; and it is indeed difficult for a non-Mussulman to realize the extent to which the Turk's religious belief coloured his whole conduct and character, blending itself inseparably, not merely with such higher feelings as patriotism, loyalty, and affection, but even

with the most seemingly trivial minutiae of food and dress. It not only sent men by thousands cheerfully to the battle-field, but inspired them beforehand with a profound conviction of their own moral and national superiority, and a consequent disdain for the infidel enemy, which made the newest levies as confident of victory as if they had gone through a successful campaign. The contempt which the European felt for the Turk as a hopeless laggard in the nineteenth-century race of civilization, was feeble compared with the contempt which the Turk felt for the European as a Giaour and a money-grubber. No one, in fact, who knew the Turks could be much surprised at the courage with which they fought, to whatever cause he may attribute it; but what certainly did surprise their best friends, almost as much as their foes, was the way in which they moved their men and their material about. Deficient as the Turkish transport and control services were supposed to be, they seem to have been, in the earlier stages of the war at all events, worth the imitation of countries with much higher pretensions. Up to the time of the battle of Plevna, about 110,000 men, with 10,000 horses, 250 cannon, with ammunition, stores, &c., had been moved by rail and steamer even considerable distances, without one single accident, delay, or break-down of any importance, except in the case of the cannon destined for Erzeroum, but left sticking in the mud at Trebizond—a case which naturally attracted public attention, and occurring early in the war, made people think that the worst prognostications as to Turkish mismanagement would be realized.

A curious question affecting the Turkish military movements was how the Turks contrived to find the ways and means for carrying on the war so long and so well, their financial position having been generally regarded as well-nigh desperate even before the war began. A total financial collapse had been predicted for months, and yet large bodies of troops were moved about, and the provisioning of the huge armies in the fields went on without interruption. Nor was there any flagrant default in payment of stores by the War Office; on the contrary, a portion of the arms and ammunition supplied by America was regularly paid for in advance, and the rest punctually on their delivery. Where could the money come from? A forced loan was voted by the Parliament before its dissolution, and was to have come into operation in August;

but owing to the poverty-stricken condition of the people, it was found impracticable to enforce the payment of the double taxes.

Some partial explanation of the mystery was afforded by the fact that the Government was not paying official salaries, that the army lived almost entirely on the country it occupied, that the payment of the foreign debt was left in abeyance, and that hence the income, reduced as it was, sufficed for the moment to pay for such wants as were supplied from abroad, and which had to be paid for in cash.

If the ordinary taxes could have been possibly collected by the Turks during the campaign, they certainly need not have been embarrassed for lack of the "sinews of war," considering the rather sweeping reductions in their payments. Not only, however, did an enemy occupy their most lucrative province, but that enemy, on the 31st July, issued a decree which was to have an important bearing on the payments by those who had hitherto been Turkish tax-payers. The Russian decree issued that day in Bulgaria stated, that "the tax hitherto paid by the Christian inhabitants for exemption from military service is abolished. Tithes are likewise abolished from the 1st of January, 1878, and will be replaced by a tax to be paid in cash. In the current year tithes will be collected in the old way where the Government are in want of corn and other agricultural produce, and in money where there is no such want. Agents, to whom the Turkish Government used to farm out the collection of tithes, will receive no indemnity for advances made to that Government. Taxes are to be paid in Russian paper money or cash, the value of the assessments to be determined by the Russian authorities. No Turkish paper money will be accepted."

Whatever their financial difficulties, there was, however, one tangible advantage which was an unquestionably important one for the Turks, and one which no efforts of the Russians could seriously diminish, viz., their supremacy at sea. It is true the Turkish fleet had not done as much as was expected from it, more particularly on the Danube; but its services were not to be altogether reckoned by bombarded towns or blown up pontoons; and the daily and hourly influence of the naval superiority of the Turks on the fortunes of the campaign may fairly claim a place in history. When we consider what the

fleet had done and was, at the period of which we are writing, still doing, we cannot but wonder that the Russians had not made strenuous efforts during the previous six years to create something which would keep the sea against the ironclads of Abdul Aziz. Why did the Czar take the opportunity of the French collapse to demand a modification of existing treaties, if he did not intend to profit by it for the only purpose that it could advance? War with Turkey was either not looked upon as in the near future, or else the capacity of the Turks to make use of the Sultan's costly ships was underrated by the Russians. The event showed that the fleet was invaluable. It would hardly be too much to say that, if the Sultan had an army in Bulgaria, he owed its existence to his navy. The ships brought the Turkish troops in good condition from distant provinces of the Empire; and they enabled the most important changes in the disposition of the force to be rapidly effected, as when Suleiman Pasha, with 20,000 of the army of Montenegro, was brought by sea in a few days to the railway terminus near the mouth of the Maritza, whence he went up to the Balkans. Contemporaneously with this, a still larger force was brought from the Asiatic seat of war to Europe. The disturbances in the Caucasus, which undoubtedly produced a real effect on the Armenian campaign, and probably saved Kars and Erzeroum for the time, were due to the supremacy of the Turks at sea. But even all this strengthening of the Turkish military power was not of so great importance as the hindrances which the fleet opposed to the Russian advance. If the Russians had had the command of the sea, they might quickly have made the Quadrilateral untenable, and their own armies might have been supplied on the march. Now it was a question of roads and carts, and a few hours' rain was noticed and argued upon as a military event. The final success in the campaign seemed to be a question of the capacity of the Russian transport service to supply the immense army which was necessary to beat down the Turkish resistance. And whatever obstacles to this work the progress of the campaign developed were in a large proportion due to the naval power of the Turks.

We have, in a previous chapter, related how Roumania was to some extent forced to make alliance with Russia, and in consequence to break the last links which bound her to Turkey; how

she proclaimed her independence, and the manner in which she was rapidly led to seek the consummation of this important step by an active share in the war undertaken by Russia. The conduct of the young Roumanian people was criticized with some severity by the European press. It is easy, however, when people are free, to counsel patience to those who are not; and it is difficult to blame a nation for profiting by a favourable occasion to gain its liberty, or for seeking to show itself worthy of it by manifesting its manliness, and shedding its blood on the fields of battle.

Had it been possible to foresee that at the close of the struggle Russia would put forward claims affecting the integrity of the Roumanian territory, events would doubtless have assumed a very different complexion. As it was, however, Prince Charles, in putting himself at the head of the party of action, had certainly responded to the desires of the great majority of the Roumanians. The army of operation had been divided into two corps, each composed of two divisions, and forming a total of 40,000 men, besides 20,000 territorial militia, who were levied to protect the country; and throughout the whole of Roumania committees were spontaneously formed for the purchase of arms and equipments necessary for this contingent. No one bargained for his devotion, no one murmured against the extraordinary requisitions that were made; the Minister for War, indeed, ordered each district to furnish 150 carriages yoked with three horses. The Roumanian territory comprising thirty-two districts, the requisition ought to furnish in all 4800 carriages and 14,400 horses—an enormous number, and considered impossible to obtain by those who knew the country. They were, nevertheless, almost all forthcoming within the required time.

We have said that Prince Charles responded to the desires of the majority of his people. There was, however, a considerable number of Roumanians who were regarded as the party of peace, and who exercised no small amount of influence in the country. The active military co-operation with Russia was a step undertaken by Prince Charles without consulting the Chambers, and both Conservative and Liberal journals spoke out rather plainly, reminding the Government of the responsibility it was assuming.

The objection of the Roumanian peace party,

however, might have been the more readily overcome had it not been for the ill grace with which the Russians seemed inclined, from the first, to receive the co-operation of Prince Charles' army. The Colossus of the North felt itself humiliated in appearing to have need of the alliance of the small Principality; and all the efforts that Prince Charles made for a long time to obtain an honourable settlement of the co-operation of his army in the war, stranded on the contemptuous whims of the Russian Staff. The Prince wished that his troops might act separately, so that they might have their share of the glory; he received an insolent reply, that soldiers like his could not be relied on, and an offer to brigade his troops simply and purely *into* the Russian ranks. When he protested, he was asked if he preferred that his troops should be employed as forage and garrison troops. The second Plevna defeat came to the assistance of the Roumanians, and lowered the Muscovite pride. Even after the first defeat by Osman Pasha, they had begun to perceive the enormous error which had been committed in their estimation of the Turkish force; and, as described in the previous chapter, were only too glad to have at hand a Roumanian division to cross the Danube and guard Nikopol.

With the exception of the very offensive airs assumed by the Russian Staff in the matter, neither party to this unfortunate difference was altogether in the right or utterly in the wrong. The Grand-duke's military reasons for insisting that the Roumanian army should merge its individuality in that of its colossal ally, and play the part of a mere contingent, to be utilized by Russian generals as uncompromisingly as though it formed an integral part of the Russian army, were plausible enough; whilst the Prince could not be blamed for claiming the command of his own army, upon which he had bestowed infinite pains, and which owed no fealty to Russia, was not subsidized by her, and had taken the field as her ally, but without entering into any single stipulation by which its independence of action could be held to be fettered or even limited. Concessions should have been mutually made, no doubt; but it is obvious that it was far more easy for the Grand-duke to yield, than for Prince Charles, whose whole future in his adopted country would unquestionably have been compromised had he openly connived at the humiliation of the national

army, raised and maintained at such ruinous cost to the Roumanian people.

After the serious events of the 30th July, Russian ill-will only increased, when what had been regarded till then as a humiliation became a necessity. Prince Charles, believing the occasion favourable for at last settling the question, presented himself at the Russian head-quarters in order to negotiate an arrangement; but he found there still more irritation than before. The Grand-duke seemed more hostile than ever, and the Prince was obliged to return without having accomplished anything. To accept the help of Roumania was for the Russians to confess in the face of Europe that they had been grossly deceived, and had not men sufficient to continue the war. The animosity of the chiefs extended to the soldiers, and the Roumanian division which had already crossed the Danube, and had been to some extent mixed with the Russians, was subjected to a series of petty and contemptible annoyances.

One incident at last put an end to the patience of the Roumanians. The Russian commander of Nikopol caused a punishment to be inflicted on a soldier of the Roumanian cavalry for some fault committed. This stirred up the officers and soldiers of the Principality, who had thus a very clear proof that they were considered as placed under the orders of the Russians. The officers of the regiment to which the punished soldier belonged presented themselves to their colonel, and declared to him that if satisfaction were not given them on this subject, each of them would challenge the first Russian officer that he met. Colonel Roznovano telegraphed to the Prince on the subject, and the latter sent a despatch to the Russian head-quarters. The answer which was given asserted that it was only a measure of military discipline. The commander of the place was responsible for order and discipline; and as the Roumanian division formed part of the Russian garrison, the jurisdiction of the commandant extended to it as well as to the rest of the troops. The Prince, already discontented with the numerous humiliations to which he and his ministers were daily subjected by the Russians, appeared for a moment disposed to resort to extremes; and announced that if he were not afforded satisfaction, and if the conditions under which he must render his co-operation were not definitely and immediately settled, he would at once give orders

to his troops to recross the Danube, and observe the strictest neutrality. This took place when the Turks were severely pressing the Russians at various points—more particularly at Shipka—and when there was consequently the greatest need of soldiers, for the Russian reinforcements were only just beginning to arrive. Russian pride was thus obliged to give way, and Prince Charles at last attained his point—that the Roumanian army should have its own chiefs, and that its movements should be entirely independent—the sole condition being that it should be combined with the Russian army.

The order was then at once given for the 30,000 men left in Roumania to prepare to cross the Danube. The point chosen for this operation was Corabia, situated about twelve miles above Nikopol. On the 24th August the 1st Brigade of the 3rd Division, commanded by General Angelesco, embarked on some pontoons, and made their way across.

Although no Turks had shown themselves in the neighbourhood, measures were immediately taken to organize the defence of the troops. Advance posts were established, and at midnight about sixty Bashi-bazouks were distinguished in their vicinity by the light of the moon. Captain Rudeanu chanced at the moment to be on a visit of inspection to the advance posts. Followed by twenty-one cavalry, he threw himself on the enemy. A fight took place; and the captain's horse falling wounded, he leaped on that of a Bashi-bazouk whom he had just killed by a shot from his revolver, and continued the fight. It was not long before the Turks took to flight. In this first combat the Roumanians had six killed and eight wounded; the Bashi-bazouks, twenty-one wounded and seventeen killed.

On the 25th the Roumanian engineers commenced the construction of a bridge at Magura. Two islets, or rather two banks of sand, situated in the river between Selistore and Corabia, were taken advantage of. The works were not in the least interrupted by the Turks. Osman Pasha, in his march from Widdin to Plevna, had taken with him the whole of the garrisons which had been dispersed at Arcer-Palanka, Lom-Palanka, Cibar-Palanka, and Rahova, so that no troops remained on the Danube except a few frontier guards. The bridge was entirely completed by the night of the 27th; and Prince Charles, followed by a brilliant staff, arrived

on the morning of the 28th to direct the crossing. When the first troops approached, M. Brătianu advanced towards them; and taking the place of the Sovereign, who could not speak sufficient Roumanian to improvise a speech, harangued them with enthusiasm. In a few words he recalled to the minds of the soldiers, who were listening with almost religious attention, the glorious memories of their ancestors; and impressed upon them that if they were about to deviate from them, it must be only in order to surpass them. The independence of the Roumanian people having been already solemnly proclaimed, it was necessary that the army, by its heroism on the battle-field, should prove that the country was truly worthy of it. The army owed that not only to the country, but also to the young and noble Prince who had done so much for it, and who would lead it himself ere long on the road to honour. An immense shout, "*Traiesca Romania!*" ("Long live Roumania!") responded to the words of the Minister, and the Roumanian army at once penetrated into Turkish territory. By August 30 the entire army had crossed, and its four divisions at once went to reinforce the Russian army operating against Plevna.

The close contact of the two armies caused many of the prejudices which had been previously entertained to disappear. A subject of surprise for the Russian officers, accustomed to receive from their soldiers something of the servility of ancient times, was the noble dignity of the bearing between superiors and inferiors in the Roumanian army. The chiefs of it called the simple trooper "brother," or "Mr.," while the trooper had no reason to tremble before his chiefs, for whom, however, he had the necessary and sufficient respect. Their obedience was, indeed, most exemplary, and it was allowed that the same spirit of discipline reigned in the army as in the best of Europe. Later, when they saw these soldiers, none of whom had ever before been under fire, dash to the assault on Plevna, the Russians were indeed obliged to confess that they had vastly underrated their courage and usefulness.

There yet remained the delicate question to decide as to the exact position to be occupied by Prince Charles in the command of the now united armies. We have explained that it was arranged that, although retaining its own officers and organization, the Roumanian troops should combine their movements with those of the Russians.

This combination, easy enough in theory, presented considerable difficulties in practice. On the one hand, it was difficult to place Prince Charles, who was a sovereign Prince, in a subordinate position; and on the other hand, it was no less difficult to place Russian officers under the command of foreigners, of whom, from a military point of view, they might have but a poor opinion.

In a great council of war, held on the 29th August at Gorni Studen, this difficulty was, however, surmounted with tolerable success. It was decided that the chief command of the army of the West should be given to Prince Charles of Roumania, on condition that he would accept a Russian general as chief of his staff. In this way both sides were satisfied. The Roumanians were proud to see their Prince at the head of the army, and the Russians were able to console themselves with the thought that the real command would be in the hands of their own chief of the staff placed with the Prince. There were, for a short time, a few murmurs against Prince Charles' nomination, but the courage of his army and the example of the Czar himself very soon dispelled them. The Emperor caused forty crosses of St. George to be distributed among the Roumanians who distinguished themselves in their first encounters with the Turks; and at a banquet shortly afterwards he rendered ample justice to the Roumanian army when proposing a toast in its honour.

The question of the co-operation of his troops being definitely settled to his satisfaction, Prince Charles sanctioned the following arrangements:—General Zottoff was appointed chief of the general staff, General Manu commander of the artillery, and Colonel Greccano first aide-de-camp to the Prince; besides whom there were four other aides-de-camp. The Roumanian army was composed of two army corps, each divided into two divisions. The commander-in-chief of the 1st Corps was General Lupu, the chief of the staff was Colonel Botenu, and the commander of artillery Colonel Dunca. Colonel Cherchez was appointed to command the 1st Division, and Colonel Logadi the 2nd. In the 2nd Army Corps General Radovici was in command, Colonel Pencovici was chief of the staff, and Colonel Herkt chief of the artillery. Colonel Cantilli commanded the 1st Division, and Colonel Angelesco the 4th. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Divisions at once took up positions on the north-

east of Plevna, so as to be able to take part in the impending attack. Prince Charles then addressed the following proclamation to his soldiers:—

“PORADIM, HEAD-QUARTERS,
8th September, 1877.

“Soldiers! A year has passed away since the struggle between the Turks and the Christians on the other side of the Danube placed our frontiers in danger.

“In order to defend them the country has appealed to you. At its voice you have left your homes, with the eagerness of men who feel that the existence of the Roumanian State depends upon their devotion.

“As long as the armies operated at a distance, and we were threatened only by bands of pillagers, we could confine ourselves to defending our own borders. But now war draws near us; should the Turks be victorious we may be certain that they will make a descent upon our country, bringing with them massacre, pillage, and devastation.

“Under these circumstances, to preserve the land from the barbarity of such aggressors, it is our duty to meet them on their own territory.

“Roumanian soldiers! you know only too well what your country has suffered for more than two hundred years, when the means of manfully defending her rights on the field of battle had been snatched from you!

“To-day you have once more an opportunity of showing your valour, and the whole of Europe has its eyes on you.

“Go forward then with truly Roumanian spirit, and let the world judge of us from our actions! We recommence to-day our ancestors' glorious struggles, side by side with the brave army of one of the greatest Powers in the world. The Roumanian army, although small, will distinguish itself, I am quite confident, by its bravery and discipline. It will thus give Roumania the rank it formerly held, and which rightly belongs to it, amongst the nations of Europe. Such is also the conviction of the August Emperor of all the Russias. We are going to fight by the side of Russians, on the field of battle, because we have a common object. The chief command of the two armies of Plevna has been intrusted to me personally. This honour is reflected upon the country—upon you. The Roumanian flag will float with glory upon the field of battle, where your ancestors for centuries

were the defenders of faith and liberty. Forward, then, Roumanian soldiers, forward! very soon will you return to your families, to your own country, liberated by you, amidst the plaudits of the whole nation.

CHARLES.”

On the same day (8th September), Prince Charles addressed another proclamation to the Roumanian people. In this document, which was longer than the first, can be found a trace of the desire for glory which agitated the young nation, and also of the secret distress with which it encountered the great risk of an active co-operation in the war.

“Roumanians,” said Prince Charles, “after two centuries of weakness and eclipse, you have once more taken up arms.” This cry corresponded with the sentiments of the majority of the population; at the time it seemed to them that they were leaving the tomb, and that, throwing off the last bonds of suzerainty, they were about to live once more. They wanted to affirm their young liberty, and the Prince gave eloquent expression to this feeling in the following part of his proclamation:—

“Bulgaria is ravaged; its Christian population are a prey to the cruelties of undisciplined Asiatic hordes; a war of extermination is declared against all bearing the name of Christian. We have therefore no reason to believe that a better fate would await Roumania if, thanks to our selfish passiveness, repeated successes placed the Turkish armies in a position to penetrate into our territory.

“Whilst Turkish fortresses from Adakalé to Matchin remain in existence, kept up, not to prevent the passage of foreign armies, not to hold in check other hostile fortresses, but only to bombard our open towns, and destroy the international and local commerce upon our great river; so long as a rule of humanity and legality is not established in Bulgaria; so long also as the rights and dignity of man are not assured to the Christians of Turkey—Roumania cannot, has no right to consider herself at peace, or safely protected against immediate and future catastrophes.

“It is therefore the duty of Roumania to contribute, in proportion to her strength and means, towards the removal of the evils which menace her, and towards the establishment amongst our neighbours in Bulgaria, of a state of things demanded by justice and modern civilization. That is imposed upon her by her glorious past, by her

most sacred interests in the present, and by her safety in the future.

"Moreover, Roumanians, are we not Christians, and do not Eastern interests concern us also? In the great question of the emancipation of the Christians of the East, is it not our duty and our right to speak a word, to give our co-operation to assist at the solution? What! ought narrow selfishness and blind passiveness to be the policy of our nation? In refusing to take part in the struggle, in not giving our assistance to those who are sacrificing themselves for the cause of humanity and justice, would not Roumania herself lose the right to demand assistance in the hour of danger?

"Roumanians!—After the efforts of three generations, thanks to the generous protection of the great European Powers, the Roumanian State was constituted. The time has come for that State to prove to herself and to Europe, by the arms of her children, that Roumania has vitality, that she has strength of her own, that she understands her mission at the mouths of the Danube, and possesses the manliness to fulfil it.

"The Christian Powers of Europe have often had opportunities of perceiving that the Roumanians can restrain their aspirations within the limits of political prudence.

"Now the moment has come to prove, by the participation of our army in the war, by its bravery and discipline, that Roumania can be and is an important element, worthy of contributing towards the establishment of order and stability in the East.

"All these considerations amount almost to duties on our nation; they point out that we should enter into the combat, and contribute with others towards the cessation of a war which will more and more exhaust our moral and material strength the longer it is prolonged.

"Therefore, in order to realize as speedily as possible the peace so much desired, to firmly establish our rights as a free and independent nation, and to strengthen ourselves in the estimation and confidence of foreign nations, invoking the names of your great hero-princes, formerly the energetic defenders of Christianity in the East, following the example of your old annies, which in the times of their glory carried in triumph the Roumanian standards from the Black Sea to the Baltic, we have crossed the Danube!"

Prince Charles relied, as we can see, upon reasons of pure sentiment, when he announced

that, in taking part in the war, Roumania was fighting "for the firm establishment of its rights as a free and independent nation;" and he did not say by whom or by what the establishment of these rights was guaranteed. It appeared tolerably certain at the time, and subsequent events amply proved the fact, that no secret treaty bound Russia on this point. The Roumanian statesmen, then, could only reckon upon two expectations, which, how ever, it must be confessed, were fairly sound views, viz., the moral influence that the act when performed would exercise upon the diplomatists intrusted with settling the affairs of the East at the close of the war, and the support of Germany, supposed to be assured beforehand to a Hohenzollern.

With preconceived impressions of Oriental apathy and indifference, it is difficult to imagine how easily the people of Constantinople were moved either to the wildest excitement of joy or the deepest dejection, as the various items of news arrived from the seat of war. Unlike the stolid and immovable Turk in general, the inhabitants of the Ottoman metropolis were singularly impressible; and just previous to the battle of Plevna, the news of General Gourko's raid south of the Balkans had caused a general gloom and foreboding to pervade every mind. The English newspaper correspondents were not merely permitted to send by telegraph their views of the danger to which Constantinople was exposed; they were actually invited to send such telegrams, and it was especially pointed out to them that, in view of the peril to which the Christians were exposed and of the inability of the Porte to protect them, it was highly desirable that England should do something for the defence of Constantinople.

It is therefore easy to conceive the reaction from despair to triumph which succeeded on the arrival of the news of Osman Pasha's victory on July 30, in which it was declared that 8000 Russians had been killed and 16,000 wounded, whilst the Turkish loss was stated to have been only 100 killed and 300 wounded! Away then with dejection! No more pessimism! The Turkish army had just proved that it could fight and beat its adversaries, and the most modest idea now entertained at Constantinople seemed to be that whatever Russians might be spared by the triumphant Ottoman armies would speedily be drowned in the Danube.

The elevation of the public tone found its official expression in the following letter of congratulation

which the Sultan addressed to his victorious general at Plevna :—

"My faithful Muchir, Osman Pasha—By your courage, and the victory which you have gained, you have raised the honour of our armies and the glory of the Ottomans. May God assist our efforts! Salute all the officers and soldiers, whom I consider more than my children. By their valour and intrepidity they have filled their Padi-shah with satisfaction. May God grant them the success of their arms in defence of Islam and eternal bliss. As a recompense for your services I grant you the decoration of Osmanie, and I instruct you at the same time to reward the superior and inferior officers whom your reports have eulogized. When the heroic defenders of Islam return, I will myself distribute the medal of honour to those who deserve it. Say to all—commanders, officers, and soldiers—that they shall be rewarded without delay, every time they earn it. I send to you a special envoy charged to bear witness to all of you both my satisfaction and delight.

ABD-UL-HAMID KHAN."

On the other hand, the Russian defeat at Plevna, with the reverses they encountered about the same time south of the Balkans and in Asia Minor—which will be described in other chapters—naturally produced in Russia a profound sensation; and the enthusiasm and self-confidence with which almost every one in that country had greeted the outbreak of the war, and the joy and sense of security which were caused by the comparatively easily effected crossing of the Danube and the other opening successes, were sadly damped. At the opening of the campaign there was an inclination to exaggerate the smallest successes into important victories, and to make light of or utterly ignore any reverses which happened. All this was now changed, but nowhere was there anything that could be called a panic, nor was there any attempt to extenuate the disaster. As on many former occasions, the Russians showed that they had the courage to look misfortune boldly in the face. They admitted frankly that they lost 7000 men at Plevna, that they had received a serious check in Bulgaria, that consequently the army must be concentrated to the north of Tirnova, the positions in the Shipka Pass must probably be abandoned, and the Commanders in future must not so underrate their

adversary as it was now evident had been done to far too great an extent. "We attribute these checks," said the *Nouveau Temps*, "solely to our great faith in our strength, to our disdain for the enemy—a disdain which he by no means merits." "Our defeat," the *Voie* confessed on its side, "arises from this idea too much rooted amongst us, that a single Russian soldier is sufficient for two or three Turks." The people, however, were nowhere discouraged nor desirous of abandoning the enterprise. Serious as the check had undoubtedly been, it would not, they thought, at all affect the final result of the struggle. The Generals in future must be better informed as to the position and strength of the Turkish armies; and if serious mistakes were avoided, they would still arrive at their destined goal.

"We have received two terrible warnings," it was said; "let us hope that our Generals will profit by them, and act more prudently in future." The idea that these reverses might lead to a termination of hostilities appeared to every one supremely ridiculous. "Had we gained a great victory," it was said on all sides, "we might have been induced to conclude peace; but after a defeat how is it possible to think of such a thing? The time for compromise is past, and concessions which Russia would have gladly accepted six months ago would now be rejected with disdain. Whatever sacrifices may be required, we must fight it out to the end. After the events which have occurred in Bulgaria, it is impossible that the Bulgarian Christians shall be again subjected to Mussulman rule." "The honour of Russia," it was said, "demands the full and entire completion of the work of deliverance for which it has drawn the sword. On this point there can be no difference of opinion among the Russian people. The more obstacles this enterprise presents, the more resolution will Russia display to overcome them. Let no one be deceived in this: a nation of eighty millions like ours, possesses a great deal of strength and unthought of resources to accomplish such a task." Nearly every day some officer arrived from the seat of war, and related what he had seen and heard—showing plainly that the most fanatical hatred had been excited between the Christian and Mussulman population, and that for a long time it would require a very strong Government to preserve order.

What the Russians feared much more than

military reverses was diplomatic interference. They knew well that Austria and England might cause them infinite trouble, and consequently they watched with intense interest all movements of the political barometer in London and Vienna. The declaration of Lord Beaconsfield in the House of Lords on August 9, which is given further on, accordingly attracted much attention and produced much comment in Russia. Though it was justly regarded as somewhat vague and oracular, it was considered on the whole as eminently satisfactory. "Lord Beaconsfield has at last spoken," said the *Russki Mir*, "after a long mysterious silence, and his utterances have not at all the spirit which the Turcophiles expected. He confirmed his resolution to preserve the conditional neutrality of England, after several vain attempts to abandon it. Since all his attempts to organize a coalition against us have failed, he now expresses his confidence in the former declarations of the Russian Government. Turcophilism is at last excluded from the official programme of England, and the Oriental fancy of Mr. Disraeli is pushed into the background by the course of Eastern affairs and by the common sense of Lords Salisbury and Derby." Several other journals expressed similar views, and being thus reassured with regard to possible diplomatic interference, the Russians felt they could concentrate all their attention on military considerations, and the chief interest centred in the departure of the Guards and the calling out of the Reserves. Every town and district had to furnish its given number of recruits. One morning the door of every house in St. Petersburg was found to have a notice affixed to it, declaring the number of men required to be furnished by each district, and nearly every office and manufactory in the city lost one or more of its employés—either clerks, messengers, or workmen. One large ironworks had about 280 men taken, and two cotton mills about 100 each. Some of the cases were very hard ones, and the scenes at the Southern Railway Station when a fresh consignment of troops were leaving were sometimes very sad and affecting, as all the poor peasant women accompanied their relatives to town to see them off, with evidently not a very great hope of ever beholding them again. There was also a levy of horses, which caused almost as much consternation in certain quarters as the conscription of men. A ukase was issued ordering all proprietors of horses in St Peters-

burg to send their animals to a large open space or meadow on a given day, there to be inspected and chosen according to their merits. Those found unsuitable were at once set free; but all the good ones had lots drawn for them, and the unfortunate possessors had to give them up without a murmur. The price allowed for each animal taken was 160 roubles; but as the majority had cost from 500 to 1000 roubles each, heavy losses were incurred. The scene at the drawing was a most exciting one, most of the merchants and leading men being present—each hoping to save his own property.

The following extract from a letter from Moscow at this period gives a vivid picture of the scenes in and around that city:—"The peasants are being called off to join the Imperial army from all directions. Wherever one goes families are mourning and in tears because either the father or brothers, or it may be all, are under orders to start within the space, perchance, of only a few hours, leaving home on behalf of their country's honour. Families are broken up on all sides. The miserable wives are selling the household furniture they possess to procure means of subsistence now that the prop of each small establishment is taken from them; and the streets of Moscow are thronged in many places with mattresses and samovars, or Russian tea-urns, without which adjunct no Russian household, whether it be that of the highest or lowest in the land, is ever deemed complete. The price of provisions is of course rising proportionately. Among the upper classes homes are in the same state of change. Those who have retired from the army or navy are in many cases being recalled; all will, it is presumed, be summoned in the course of time. Even whilst I write, a general "round" call is being made for all to serve in the militia. Notices to this effect have been served on all those in number one of the six districts into which Moscow is divided, and every one feels in a state of uncertainty as to where he may find himself quartered even in three or four days. As to a month hence, no one seems to dare to reckon upon that date. A house-to-house visitation is going on, instituted by those at the head of affairs, relative to the number of both men-servants and horses kept by every householder, a large quota of which must each now be parted with for public service. Substitutes on the part of the former are not accepted. As a rule the recruits are full of enthusiasm, and funds are rolling in for the sick

and wounded on all sides, the peasants even urging the acceptance of their 'widow's mite.'

The Turkish victory at Plevna was not only fraught with consequences of the deepest military interest to the combatants and to Roumania, but its political results—especially in Austria and Great Britain—were also of the utmost importance. In fact, to the society of St. Petersburg, and to the politicians of Vienna, Pesth, and London, the unmistakable Russian defeat was almost as great a revelation as to the generals of the Czar. It taught them that the war, however great previously, would have to be immeasurably greater before it came to an end, and that the end could not be predicted, either as to time or events.

It is not matter of surprise that Austria, with the great convulsion on her frontier, should have thought it necessary to take special precautions. From the commencement of the war the Hungarians had strongly sympathized with the Turkish cause. The Croats and their kinsmen were of different sentiments; but both populations agreed in maintaining that the fabric of the common State should not be threatened.

On the 31st of July a Ministerial meeting was held, and it was determined to prepare for the mobilization of a part of the Austrian army. The politicians and soldiers who were the next neighbours of the combatants, viewing the war more closely than any others in Europe, believed the collapse of the Ottoman Power to be at hand, and thought it necessary that Austria should be ready to maintain her interests in the presence of a Russian army flushed by victory, and perhaps too triumphant and headstrong to be restrained by the Czar himself. For Austria there was one great subject of apprehension—the fusion of Roumania and the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey into a single State, extending from the Danube almost to the Adriatic. The Court of Vienna had obtained from the Czar a pledge that no such State should be established; and during the first two months of the war the Austrian Government were satisfied with this understanding, which the difficulties of the campaign seemed to render obligatory on the Russians. But the passage of the Danube and the Balkans startled the Austrians from their complacency; what had seemed distant and contingent now appeared close before them, and it was necessary to face it.

Within two or three days the situation suddenly

changed. On the very day the Ministerial resolution was taken at Vienna, the Russians were repulsed in their fierce attack on Plevna; and instead of anxiety as to Russian victories, Russian defeats were now discussed—a contrast compared by a Vienna journal to the surprise felt by the world when the French, at the time of their great revolution, repulsed the armies of united Europe. The position of Turkey had all at once entirely changed. She was giving proof of an energy of which she had not been deemed capable, and the Crescent was no longer an object of pity. The Austrian Press almost without exception rejoiced at the successes of the Turks—pointing out, however, that they were still only in the middle of the war, and that many surprises might still be in store for them. Turkey, it was remarked, was not yet saved, whatever the military glory she had just acquired.

On August 8th the Emperors of Austria and Germany met at Ischl, and for some time after much speculation was hazarded as to the subjects discussed at their interview, and also as to the exact condition of a Triple Alliance which it was believed existed between Germany, Austria, and Russia.

In reply to an interpellation on the latter subject in the Austrian Parliament, two or three weeks afterwards, M. Tisza said he thought it necessary to clear up what was meant by such an expression as the Triple Alliance. In the sense in which it was usually understood—namely, that the three Powers had pledged themselves in some concrete form upon the Eastern Question, and contracted obligations towards each other—in that sense, said M. Tisza, the Triple Alliance had never existed nor did exist now. The whole of this so-called alliance consisted in this—and this was no secret—that the three Emperors and their Governments agreed, in the interests of European peace, to come to an understanding on any question that might arise. This understanding had prevailed since 1873, and the fact that the present war had not become an European one must, in part at least, be attributed to the friendly relations among the three Powers. "The fact that one of these three Governments, against the opinion of the two others, had begun a war, creates no obligation concerning the Eastern Question as regards either of these two other Powers, and most certainly not as regards the Austro-Hungarian Government. On our side it

has been declared from the beginning that, whatever the issue of the war may be, nothing shall be done of which we disapprove."

The political results of the Battle of Plevna were also very important in England. After the historical debate in the House of Commons on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions—which we have summarized in Chapter XX.—the great excitement which had prevailed immediately before that debate took place gradually subsided, and the large majority of thinking men in the country seemed disposed to view the Eastern Question with far more calmness and far less prejudice than at any former time. Above all, they wished that England should not drift into another Crimean war for unimportant visionary interests. But on the other hand, there was a large and influential section of the British public who were in a very different state of mind. Some of these were positively bellicose, whilst in others the bellicose instincts were in a latent and easily excitable condition. Among the masses there was also a very vivid recollection of the Crimean war, and the half-forgotten hostility excited by the siege of Sebastopol often came to the surface, while the feeling of indignation caused by the Bulgarian atrocities in the previous year had well nigh died out.

Under these circumstances a very small spark might unexpectedly have produced a very big explosion, and it thus became the duty of all who exercised an influence on public opinion to use their power with extreme circumspection. Unfortunately some organs of the press employed the language of passion and rhetoric, when the calm words of reason and logic would have been more in place; and most inflammatory appeals were made in the anti-Russian journals with the view of inducing the English Government to interfere by force of arms. Towards the end of June the paper which throughout took the most extreme view, and which was at the same time generally recognized as an organ of the Government, announced that the Cabinet had decided to ask Parliament for a vote of credit to the amount of at least £2,000,000 before it separated for the recess—with a view to increased military preparations. This supposed semi-official statement naturally created considerable excitement, and in a letter commenting on it, dated 30th June, Mr. Gladstone, whilst admitting that it would be pre-

mature to give an opinion absolutely that such a vote could not in any form be admissible, said it bore no analogy whatever to the vote he had obtained for a similar amount shortly after the Franco-German War broke out in 1870. The purpose of that vote was definite and known [to defend Belgium if necessary]; the entire country was agreed upon that purpose, and was also agreed, even to a man, upon the prosecution of a thoroughly pacific policy. But at the present time an active section, with many powerful influences at its command, laboured energetically to promote intervention in the war for purposes condemned, as he believed, by the mass, and, as all must admit, by a large part of the nation. The country had before it the fact that an influential portion of Parliament, of the Metropolitan Press, and of its readers, leant to measures for the prosecution, after one fashion or another, of what had been known for the previous twelve months as a Turkish policy. Now, it could not be too clearly understood that any proposal, or attempt under the plea of supposed "British interests," or under any other plea, to give effect to such a policy by the proposal of an increased vote for armaments would meet with resistance; and with such a resistance, from the energetic and deliberate convictions which he believed to be those of the people, as ought to form the subject of serious consideration by her Majesty's Government, before they arrived at any decision which would have the effect of provoking it. It was, indeed, not easy to conceive a form in which such a vote could be asked at the present juncture, without its entailing the immense evil of reviving at the Ottoman Porte the expectations, so much fostered twelve months previously by an unhappy policy, that England would be forced by her anxiety for "British interests" at one period or another of the war to intervene by arms on behalf of Turkey. The majority, as he believed, of the nation had warmly desired that Great Britain should have undertaken, and should have encouraged the other Powers to undertake, a great and safe collective work, to put an end to intolerable shame and oppression, and to keep their hold upon the means of directing towards their proper aim all measures which might be professedly addressed to pacification of the East. Through influences which had too largely prevailed in deciding the action of the Government, this desire had

been entirely baffled. Great Britain virtually repudiated a great and noble duty, so far as practical measures for its execution were concerned. But it was a long stride indeed beyond that in the direction of mischief if they were, either avowedly or underhand, to be made the instruments of giving an active countenance or support to a great iniquity now struggling to retain its licensed power of blight and desolation; and if he knew anything of the convictions and feelings of the nation, into such a course as that it would not on any terms, however plausible, consent to be driven or cajoled.

Whether the Government had never really entertained the intention attributed to it by its too enthusiastic partizan in the press, or whether the opposition to such a proposal threatened in this letter induced them to abandon the idea, a few days after the Chancellor of the Exchequer set the matter finally at rest by stating, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, that no additional vote for military purposes would be necessary.

Scarcely had the excitement caused by this incident subsided when a profound sensation was created by the announcement that the British fleet had been again ordered to Besika Bay. This event took place a few days after the crossing of the Danube, and it was felt by many that in spite of all the clear and forcible declarations of various members of the Government that England would not assist Turkey, the Turks would inevitably assume from this proceeding that she had at last seen the error of her ways, and meant to return to her old policy. To arrive at this conclusion it was said Turkey had no need to dispute the assertion of the Government. They had simply to reason in this way:—Granted that England will not help Turkey, *qua* Turkey, it does not follow that she will not help us as the representatives of her own interests. We never imagined that England would follow a sentimental policy, and be guided by affection and sympathy. It was not from such feelings she protected us in the past, and it is not on such feelings that we rely for the future. She is guided in respect to us, as in respect to others, by the consideration of her own interests, and these have not changed. Popular clamour induced the Government to deviate for a moment from their natural and traditional policy; but now that Russia threatens Constantinople the temporary aberration is at an

end. She must come and fight, if not for us, at least together with us, and that is practically the same thing. See, her fleet is already at the entrance to the Dardanelles, ready to sail up to Seraglio Point as soon as Constantinople is seriously menaced.

It was also felt by the same class of persons, that as the step would encourage the Turks to prolong the struggle, it would also probably tend to increase the demands of Russia, and at the same time embitter the relations between Russia and England, and thereby render much more difficult the solution of the questions which would have to be decided at the end of the war. Popular feeling in Russia had been for some time very hostile to England; but after the commencement of the war that hostility had subsided.

The proceeding, of course, at once formed the subject of discussion in the House of Commons. On Thursday, July 6, in answer to Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr. Gourley, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Stafford Northcote) said—The object with which the fleet has been sent to Besika Bay is that it should be at a convenient station. The position of Besika Bay is a central one, which enables the Admiral to communicate with rapidity, if necessary, with her Majesty's ambassador at Constantinople, and with the British Government; and it is thought, therefore, to be a most convenient position. The fleet consists of eight vessels, of which seven are iron-clads, and one an unarmed frigate. I was asked why they have been sent there in place of the Suez Canal. The answer is that Besika Bay is a convenient and central station, and that the Suez Canal is not equally central. Moreover, there is no particular reason why any vessel should be sent to the Suez Canal beyond the one already stationed there.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson thereupon expressed an opinion that, even for the sake of better anchorage, he thought this was a most unfortunate time to alarm Europe by a step which would be interpreted as a hint, a warning, or a threat to one or other of the belligerents: whereupon the Chancellor of the Exchequer said he was afraid that the answer which he gave before had been misunderstood. He did not say anything about good anchorage. He said that the reason why the fleet had been sent to Besika Bay was that the situation was a good and central one for the purpose of communication between the British

ambassador at the Porte, on the one hand, and the British Government at home on the other. He was sorry that it should be supposed that there was anything in that answer, or in the action which the Government had taken, which should be open to such an observation about alarming Europe by a step which might be taken as a hint, or a warning, or a threat by either of the parties to the war. That, it appeared to him, was a very unnecessary construction to put upon the course which had been adopted. It would not be convenient at that moment to enter into a general discussion of foreign policy. He would, however, say this much: they spent a fortnight a few weeks before in discussing fully the position of affairs and in explaining the policy of the Government, and they had since laid on the table despatches in which that policy was set forth in the most distinct manner in communications of a diplomatic character. Nobody who read those despatches carefully, and also the language used by the ministers in the course of the debate to which he had referred, could, it seemed to him, refuse to admit at least this—that the Government had stated its views and intentions with as much clearness and minuteness as had ever been done in any diplomatic despatches, with respect to the war which was going on. As to neutrality, their principle had been to protect British interests, and they had even gone beyond the enunciation of the doctrine, which might be looked upon as a truism, of regard for British interests, by specifying, with a detail for which he found no precedent in similar circumstances, the particular points which they considered those interests to embrace. In discharging the duty which rested upon them, they had, he believed, been supported by the confidence of the country.

The Chancellor had evidently weighed his words carefully, and spoke in the consciousness that they would be weighed, if not counted, by others. On the following Monday he was even eager to contradict a report from Vienna, according to which the British ambassador at Constantinople had informed the Sultan that it might be necessary for Great Britain to occupy Constantinople and the Dardanelles for the protection of British interests.

On Thursday, July 19, on a motion for papers, Lord Stratheden urged the Government to more vigorous steps in defence of Turkey, reminding

them that they need fear no obstacles from a House of Commons in which they had a majority of 130 upon the Eastern Question. England had waited for the passage of the Danube. She had waited till the Balkans had been traversed. Was she now to wait till Adrianople had been occupied? Was she to wait till the last line of defence traced by Sir John Burgoyne—twenty miles from Constantinople—was approached? Was it only after the suburbs had been occupied that she was to defend the capital?

Earl Granville, leader of the Opposition, said that the position of England with regard to the Eastern Question was one of suspense. Whilst deprecating a discussion that had no definite object, he wished it to be understood that, if he and his friends did not take part in it, it was not because they were blind to the gravity of the situation, or content with the policy of the Government.

The Earl of Derby, Foreign Secretary, said, with regard to Lord Stratheden's complaint of the neutrality of the Government and their loss of influence at Constantinople, that was not the impression of those who were connected with the embassy. If he meant that England did not exercise the influence she would do in case she was fighting on the Turkish side, doubtless he was right. On the other hand, if he meant that the British embassy did not enjoy the position which fairly belonged to it, he was decidedly wrong. Lord Derby also denied the neutrality of England would tell against her ultimate influence in the negotiations that must follow the termination of the war; and argued that no power could intervene with greater effect than one that had remained quiescent, and whose forces were fresh and unspent when those of the combatants were exhausted. The language held by Her Majesty's Government had been uniformly clear and firm, and their attitude well understood. They had told the Porte that it could expect no assistance from England after its rejection of the proposals made by the Conference.

On Monday, July 23, the most intense excitement was caused by announcements in the daily journals headed "An Expedition to the East," and stating that the Government had determined to occupy Gallipoli.

Questions were naturally asked in both Houses of Parliament on the subject the same evening, and in both an answer almost identical was given.

Lord Granville questioned Lord Derby, who replied as follows:—"What has happened is this. The Mediterranean garrisons are at present, I understand, below their full complement; and in the uncertain and disturbed condition of Europe, it has been thought desirable that they should be strengthened to the extent of about 3000. That is the sole foundation for the statements in the newspapers." In the House of Commons the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, in answer to the Marquis of Hartington, that "the Government thought it right, in the present unsettled state of the Mediterranean region, to raise the garrison of Malta to its full complement, and that number of troops is about to be despatched for that destination. That is the sole answer I can give."

These answers, it will be seen, committed the Government to nothing either way, and left every one to give the reins to his imagination, and explain the facts this way or that as to him seemed best; and indeed this was done to the fullest extent by the newspapers—each vehemently contending that the action of the Government was susceptible of but one interpretation, which was, of course, that which the particular journal had all along foreseen would be the policy that circumstances would develop.

In the midst of this excitement (July 25) Mr. Bright—who had not spoken in the debate on Mr. Gladstone's resolutions—visited Bradford to unveil a statue erected to his friend, the late Mr. Cobden. In the evening there was an enormous public meeting in the Town Hall, and the right hon. gentleman, in the course of a long address, expounded his views on the aspects of British foreign policy. "We are citizens," he said, "of a very great Empire—an Empire such as never before existed upon the globe. It is an Empire in which we cannot avoid having some pride, and if we are sensible and wise we cannot avoid seeing also that there is no small peril connected with it. We have wide interests touching other countries in almost every part of the globe. If we are at war nearly half the world is at war; and yet there is always a war party in this country. At this moment there are two policies before us, and I wish to ask you for which you will give your vote?" (Cries of "Peace!").

Mr. Bright then entered upon a retrospective

view of the various wars which had taken place in the Old World and the New since the Crimean war. Speaking of the struggle in America, he said—"Well now, in those cases you see that war was avoided, and I would ask you now if there is one single man in the United Kingdom outside Bedlam—and I doubt if there be one inside it—who regrets the course of neutrality which the people and the Government of the United Kingdom pursued? But there was one case in which we took a different course, and that was the case of the war between Russia and Turkey in 1853. Turkey declared war against Russia, and we, after advising the Turk to accept a proposition of mediation and arbitration, which the Turk refused and which Russia accepted, we took sides with Turkey notwithstanding, and entered into a sanguinary conflict with Russia. Now, if in 1853 we had advised the Porte to make the concession urged upon it by Russia, which was only to strengthen the hands of Russia in defence of the Christian subjects of Turkey, Turkey would have avoided that war which was the forerunner, it may be, of its destruction. We should have avoided the contest into which we entered; three-quarters of a million of men, according to Mr. Kinglake (more I think he puts it at), would have been saved from slaughter and death by toil, and neglect, and disease; millions—I know not how much, perhaps two or three hundred millions—of treasure would not have been wasted; and in all probability we should have avoided the vast increase of the armaments of the Continent which was made after that war and as an immediate consequence of it, and some of the many subsequent wars that have disturbed the peace of Europe. I remember a line that Milton wrote. In one of his grand sonnets he says—

For what can war but needless wars still breed?

and that war has bred indescribable loss and suffering to several of the nations of Europe. But then at that time there was a great jealousy of Russia. The judgment of the nation was disturbed, argument was of no avail, facts that were true were disputed, passions were excited; and the Government, which was responsible to a large extent for exciting the people, went into that disastrous and, in my opinion, most unnecessary war. But the war party is always jealous of somebody; it always hates somebody. Forty years

ago it was jealous of Russia; and at that time to such an extent were the people afraid of Russia, that they believed that we in the north of England, especially on the eastern coast of Yorkshire, were in danger of an invasion from the Baltic. Now, we know that that would have been a game that would have established the lunacy of any man who sent out a fleet with such a purpose. And yet under that sort of panic the Government of that time added 5000 men to the English navy, and then the public began to think that after all perhaps they might be safe."

Coming to the present time, Mr. Bright continued:—"The Turk, even by the acknowledgment of his own friends, has behaved very badly. He was brought to trial in some sort before the Conference at Constantinople, and the verdict went against him; but there was no result, for there was no European concert. I am sorry to say that the course pursued by England, represented by Her Majesty's Government, made European concert all but impossible. It may be thought reasonable that if we were not willing to enforce the verdict arrived at, we might, at any rate, have stood aside and left Turkey to her fate. Russia has undertaken to enforce that verdict. Now, I have not anything to say in defence of Russia, except this—that if the Conference was wise, and the negotiations were a joint interference, it seems to me to be only in accordance with reason and logic that somebody should enforce the verdict. Russia on the borders of Turkey suffers more, of course, than we do from the disturbances in Turkish provinces, and the people of Russia have sympathy with the Christian population of Turkey. That sympathy exercises a great influence on the Russian Government, which therefore steps forward, in accordance with the conduct of nations as we find it in all histories, to defend that Christian population, and to put down evils, disturbances, and oppression which had become intolerable in the eyes of Europe. We might have supposed that our Government would be entirely neutral; but its neutrality is not exactly of the kind which I think it ought to have shown. For example, we say to Russia you must not touch Egypt; but Egypt is at war with Russia, because Egypt is constantly sending ships of war and troopships and soldiers to the Sultan. Russia sensibly enough, not anxious to come in conflict with England, pledges herself that Egypt shall be

kept outside of the military operations in which she is engaged. We say further, at least many people say—I am not sure whether the Government have said it in express language, but people believe they mean it—that Russia shall not approach Constantinople. But if Russia is not to approach Constantinople, what is that but to prolong the war?—to give Turkey an inducement not to make peace, and to shut out Russia from one of the commonest rights of the victor; for surely to attack the capital city of an empire or kingdom at war, and occupy it, is the speediest mode of bringing that war to a conclusion. I take it for granted with regard to Constantinople—that terrible bugbear of the war party—that if the Russians succeed in this war, and on that I give no kind of opinion, that the determination of what shall be the destiny and the Government of Constantinople will be referred to something like a general council of the Powers of Europe. Russia has over and over again proclaimed in every form of word, by every kind of solemnity of expression, that it is not their intention to hold Constantinople. They have declared that they would not consent that it should become the possession of any other great Power of Europe; and they have not shut themselves out from a fair consideration of the other Powers, and that what is consistent with the interest of Europe shall be the future conditions and government of that great city. Then there comes the question of opening the Straits, and you hear continually the word Bosphorus. The Straits, as you know, are the narrow passages coming from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. These Straits run entirely through Turkish territory. They are very narrow and easily defended from either shore; and the Russians, who possess largo territory around the Black Sea, are not permitted to send any ship of war from the Black Sea into the Mediterranean, or to bring or navigate any ship of war from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. The Straits are open to the trade of all nations, and were opened by the Russians themselves a hundred years ago, after they had been closed to the new commerce of the world during three hundred years of their possession by the Turks. Now, I hold the opening of the Straits to be absolutely inevitable, but under conditions which the Powers of Europe could find no difficulty in arranging. We have a narrow channel that runs entirely through Turkish territory; we are shareholders in a joint-

stock company. You know, of course, that the Suez Canal runs entirely through Turkish territory; but what do we see there? So important is it to us for our trade, for the supply of troops, if need be, for India, for the passage of our ships of war if it is necessary for them to be sent to India—so important is this for our interests that we are ready to defy the world in arms to keep that canal open for our traffic. But surely the Straits, which the Creator of the world made for the traffic and service of the world, have as good a right to be open to the world as the canal which was made by M. Lesseps with the money of his French shareholders. It seems to me only the other day that I heard Lord Palmerston, when he was Prime Minister in the House of Commons, declare that this Suez Canal was a chimera—that it was a sort of thing that could not be made, that it could not succeed if it were made, that it would be no advantage to England, that England should have nothing to do with it, and that none of its money should be spent upon it. Well, the result was that it was all thrown upon France, and France, stimulated by the hostility of the English Ministers, brought forth its money in vast sums; and under the wonderful energy of M. Lesseps the canal was made, and not only made, but succeeds, and will pay. Not only so, but we have become shareholders in it—not you and I, but our Government; and it is considered to be of all parts of the world that which at this moment we are most bound to defend to the very last extremity. Now, the fact is with regard to that canal, that I believe all Europe would gladly enter into any kind of reasonable compact to guarantee its improvement, its being widened, and made perpetually open for all the mercantile and other navies of the globe. Well, I believe also that the other nations would be quite willing to see the Straits between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean just as freely open. They have no kind of interest such as we pretend to have. Our interests are, to my mind, purely visionary. Russia is not a nation, nor likely to be for a long time a nation, that will have great fleets to traverse the Mediterranean as we have and if she had a fleet there it would be no more hostile to us than the new created and growing fleet of Italy, or the now existing and formidable one of France; and when I come to consider the position of Russia, shut up as she is in the north, in the Baltic by the frost, her only entrance by the Sound,

which is narrow, that she has no great navigable rivers running into the ocean—I say it is one of the most unjust ideas, and one of the very wildest and unstatesmanlike notions, that this country can perpetually forbid a nation of eighty millions of people to obtain that access to the main ocean which the Creator of the world made equally for all His people upon the globe. Some recent news—whatever judgment we may form upon it—must be admitted to be of a somewhat disturbing character. I am not anxious in my observations to-night to attack the Government. So far as I can find them taking a course which appears to me wise for the country, I would be glad to offer them any support that I can give them. But I must say that their course has been one that has seemed to me, not so much of a clear and decided statesmanship, as a course of constantly varying caprice. About a year ago we had speeches, made by the most eminent of the Ministers—speeches which excited, no doubt, suspicion and hostility in Russia, and speeches which excited in this country the ardour of the war party and alarm of the great body of the people. Well, then we had the Conference at Constantinople, and people say—it is denied—but people do say that there were two voices there. Well, Lord Salisbury was endeavouring by all the means in his power to urge the Turk to make those most moderate concessions which at the time of the Conference were demanded, that with which Russia would have been content, and the war would have been avoided; but the war party in this country, the war press, the war public men, and that portion of the public which I call the rowdy war party—there are rowdies among the rich as well as among the poor—all that party were speaking with another voice, and stimulating and encouraging the Turk to resist, thus bringing Turkey to the catastrophe in which she now finds herself. About that time the fleet was sent to Besika Bay. Now, there may be fair reasons for sending the fleet to Besika Bay. I do not want to take advantage of acts of this kind to bring charges against the Government. All I wish to say is, that while the press of that party and the war party generally—I am afraid also members connected with the Government—led us to believe that sending the fleet to Besika Bay was in some sort a menace to Russia as an exhibition of the naval power of England, Ministers came forward and told us that it had really noth-

ing to do with those reasons, and that the fleet went to Besika Bay merely because they thought there would be some disturbance in Constantinople, and that it was necessary the fleet should be in the neighbourhood for the purpose of taking care of those European subjects who might be there at the time. As there is scarcely anything which is done by the Government which is not misapprehended, according to their own statement, afterwards, I think I am justified in bringing this charge against the Government—either they themselves do not fully understand the effects of particular acts which they recommend and enforce, or they behave in a manner which shows that they have almost no confidence in the public opinion of their country. It seems to me that if they were to explain distinctly—and they have opportunities every night to do so in Parliament and every morning in influential organs of the press—when they take those steps, what is the meaning and extent of them, the public mind would not be so much disturbed.

“I admit with great frankness (said the right hon. gentleman) the difficulties of the Government. It would be unfair and unjust to them to bring charges against them, because they may not do anything wisely in the great difficulties with which they have to contend; but I believe they might tone down what I call the rowdy organs of their press. Look at the wild things which they have said. They talked of Constantinople and the Bosphorus, and they now talk of Gallipoli, a little place just as you go up the Dardanelles. I was once very nearly run ashore there myself. I only hope the Government will not be run ashore. Then they talk of Egypt, and there have been articles in the newspapers in favour of a seizure, or purchase, or an annexation, by which it is understood that we are to obtain possession of Egypt as the highway of India, and govern it upon the plan which we govern India. I do not say that it might not be found an advantage to these poor wretched subjects of the Khedive, but there is one consideration that these wild and crazy people never for a moment look at. What, do they think, would be thought in Europe if anything of the kind were done? Why this, first of all; that having seized upon something which we thought was useful for us, we left the whole of the rest of the Turkish Empire to be seized by anybody else who was strong enough

to seize it. And what would be thought by France? France, you know, has a traditional regard for Egypt. I do not know whether it goes further back than the First Napoleon, when the ‘forty centuries’ looked down from the Pyramids upon his victories; but France has from that time always been endeavouring to obtain what is called a strong interest with the Egyptian Government. Now, in this discord with regard to what should be done, there is one other consideration of great importance; and that is, that England has no allies. I believe there is no country in Europe at this moment—no other country—that feels with us in reference to this question. We are alone in Europe, utterly, I believe, with reference to the Bosphorus, and with reference to any question of danger as connected with the closing of the canal. Among other nations our demands are felt to be unreasonable and arrogant; and I confess that I sometimes feel that we stand a risk of some European combination against us, and that we shall find ourselves not triumphant, but baffled. And when the final settlement comes of these questions, unless we can be moderate and just, I suspect there is great danger that we may suffer a humiliation which not the nation only, as a whole, but which all of us individually may be made severely to feel. Now, what is our true policy? I have pointed out to you how many wars have taken place since the Crimean War—unhappily have taken place—and in which we have taken no part, though we ran in some of them great risks. None of us regret our neutrality and our pacific policy. We violated that policy at the time of the Russian war from 1854 to 1856, and we now almost all of us repent that we did violate that policy. I believe that the policy of neutrality is the true one for this country—not only true in morals, but true in statesmanship; and, in fact, I would not dissociate them at all—what is true in morals from what is true in statesmanship. I think that whenever honest counsel is solicited we ought to give honest counsel; and that if the time should come, and it may be remote, but if the time should come when the Powers of Europe shall ask us or ask themselves, ‘What should be the future destiny of Constantinople? Should the Turks remain there with a circumscribed territory and power, or should the Greeks return to the possession of this ancient seat of glory and of power?’

If that should happen, it would become this Government, not with selfishness, not with this miserable policy, but with an honest, courteous advice, to join with other Powers in the settlement that would be best for that region, and best for the future interests and the peace of Europe. I began by saying that we were a great Empire; it becomes a great State like this always to set to the world a great and noble example. I quote a passage from a recent speech of Lord Derby with a sentiment of the utmost admiration and the fullest concurrence. He says, 'We must always remember that the greatest of British interests is the interest of peace.' Now at home what are we doing? We are advancing to the utmost of our power, and it is a difficult and rugged process. After generations of neglect, we are advancing as much as we can the education of our people, we are promoting the utmost freedom of their industries, we are doing all we can to add comfort to their homes, and content and satisfaction to their hearts. Five years hence, if this matter be settled, and we do not interfere, we shall all be delighted that we did not interfere. Five years hence, if we do interfere, we shall lament for the dead whose blood has been sacrificed, for the treasure that has been wasted, for the added discord which we have brought to Europe, and, it may be, for the humiliation of statesmanship and in our military operations that we may undergo. Let us, then, I say, turning to our foreign policy, be as wise as we are endeavouring to be in our home policy. Let us try to be courteous to all nations; let us be just to all nations as far as we can, getting rid of the jealousies which have disturbed us. Let us believe, whether it be the United States on the other side of the Atlantic, or whether it be the great Empire of Russia in the east of Europe, that there are good and great and noble men in those countries; that there is no disposition whatsoever, as I believe there is none, to make quarrels with this country or to do evil of any kind to us. Great as our nation and its dependencies in every quarter of the globe is, great will be its influence for good; and though the world moves but slowly—far too slowly for our ardent hopes—to its brightest day, history will declare with 'an impartial voice that Britain, clearing off her ancient errors, led the grand procession of the nations in the path of civilization and of peace.'

A few days after news of the second Russian defeat at Plevna arrived, and as it then became evident to every one that no immediate fear of Great Britain being drawn into war need be entertained, the excitement created by the despatch of the troops to the Mediterranean very rapidly subsided.

On August 9, five days before Parliament was prorogued for the recess, the Earl of Faversham, who had a notice on the paper, "To call the attention of the House to the Eastern Question, and to the despatch addressed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Count Schouvaloff, of May 6, relative to the defence of English interests in connection with the present war," said he had received an intimation from the head of the Government that a discussion in Parliament on the Eastern Question at that time might seriously embarrass public affairs, and he had not therefore hesitated to decline to proceed with his motion.

The Earl of Beaconsfield, in expressing his sense of the forbearance of Earl Faversham, said it was the opinion of the Government that at that moment a discussion on the state of affairs in the East would not be advantageous to the public service, and might, indeed, have an injurious tendency. With regard to the policy of the Government, he would only say that it had been clearly expressed and consistently maintained; and without entering into an unnecessary discussion, he might remind their Lordships that when this cruel and destructive war began, her Majesty's Government announced that they would adopt a policy of strict, but conditional neutrality. The condition was that the interests of the country should not be imperilled. Their Lordships would remember that subsequently to that declaration a communication was made to the Russian Government, who returned a reply of a most conciliatory character. The Government had no reason to doubt that Russia would in an honourable manner observe the conditions which were the subject of that correspondence; but in any case the maintenance of those conditions was the policy of her Majesty's Government.

The general subject was thus referred to in the Queen's Speech on the prorogation of Parliament on August 14:—"The exertions which, since the commencement of disturbances in Eastern Europe, I have not ceased to make for the main-

tenance of the general peace, have unfortunately not been successful. On the outbreak of war between the Russian and the Ottoman Empires, I declared my intention of preserving an attitude of neutrality so long as the interests of this country remained unaffected. The extent and nature of those interests were further defined in a communication which I caused to be addressed to the Government of Russia, and which elicited a reply indicating friendly dispositions on the part of that State.

"I shall not fail to use my best efforts, when a suitable opportunity occurs, for the restoration of peace, on terms compatible with the honour of the belligerents, and with the general safety and welfare of other nations.

"If in the course of the contest the rights of my Empire should be assailed or endangered, I should confidently rely on your help to vindicate and maintain them."

Although kept secret at the time, it became known from the publication of a Parliamentary Paper in February, 1878, that on June 8 Count Schouvaloff, the Russian ambassador, who had just returned from St. Petersburg, called on Lord Derby with the Russian reply to the important despatch which had been addressed to him on his departure from England. (The despatch and reply are given in full at pages 315-317).

As a separate matter, Count Schouvaloff told Lord Derby that he was authorized to offer an exchange of ideas on the question of the possible conditions of peace, supposing the Porte to be willing to come to terms before the Russian forces crossed the Balkans. He said that the discussion must be made subject to two conditions—Firstly, that these confidential proposals should not be made public without his first having an opportunity of verifying the accuracy of any statements attributed to him; and, secondly, that in the event of her Majesty's Government declining to enter on such an exchange of ideas, the terms proposed should not be communicated to the Porte. To these conditions Lord Derby agreed, and on the following afternoon Count Schouvaloff placed a confidential memorandum in Lord Derby's hands, which stated that the Emperor of Russia attached the greatest importance to the maintenance of good relations between the two countries. He would make every effort to that end; but the English Cabinet, on their side, must do the same. There was nothing to add to Prince Gortschakoff's

letter with regard to the Suez Canal and Egypt. Russia would not touch upon these two points. With regard to Constantinople, the Russian assurances could only refer to taking possession of the town or occupying it permanently. It would be singular and without precedent if, at the outset of a war, one of the belligerents undertook beforehand not to pursue its military operations up to the walls of the capital. It was not impossible that the obstinacy of the Turks, especially if they know themselves to be guaranteed against such an eventuality, might prolong the war instead of bringing it to a speedy termination. When once the English Ministry was fully assured that the Russians would in no circumstances remain at Constantinople, it would depend on England and the other Powers to relieve them of the necessity of even approaching the town. It would be sufficient for them to use their influence with the Turks, with a view to make peace possible before that extreme step was taken. On their side, the Russians would willingly fall in with that view. With regard to the Straits, the arrangements by virtue of which the Black Sea was closed in time of peace, and opened in time of war to all fleets hostile to Russia, were conceived in a spirit of distrust and enmity towards her. It was a question which could only be re-settled by a general agreement, in such a manner as to guarantee the Black Sea against the consequences of the abnormal and exceptional position of the Straits. Would it be possible for Russia, at the outset of a war which might end fortunately for her, to undertake not to make Europe appreciate the necessity of a re-settlement of a state of things which was established to her prejudice? England appeared to fear lest the spreading or consequences of the war should lead Russia to threaten Bassorah and the Persian Gulf. It was not at all to their interest to trouble England in her Indian possessions, or, consequently, in her communications with them. The war which was actually going on did not demand it, for its object was clearly defined, and matters would be complicated rather than simplified by so vast an extension of the struggle. Count Schouvaloff said he was authorized to give the most categorical assurances on that subject; but such being the case, Russia had a right on her part to expect that England would take no hostile action against her. What must be arrived at was the essential object of the war; this was

the most important point of all. If an understanding could be come to on that point, if the object to be attained were well defined, and the field of operations clearly marked out, all accessory questions would arrange themselves; and the issue would be arrived at the more easily, because it would meet with the concurrence and goodwill of all the Powers, instead of with obstacles which delayed and complicated it. It was to that point that Count Schouvaloff invited Lord Derby's attention, while stating as clearly and practically as possible the views of the Russian Cabinet on the subject. What, he said, was absolutely necessary to Russia was that she should put an end to the continual crises in the East—firstly, by establishing the superiority of her arms so thoroughly that in future the Turks would not be tempted to defy her lightly; and secondly, by placing the Christians, especially those of Bulgaria, in a position which would effectually guarantee them against the abuses of Turkish administration. What was necessary to England was the maintenance in principle of the Ottoman Empire, and the inviolability of Constantinople and the Straits. These views were not irreconcilable. When once the Russians had engaged in the war, they could not admit of any restrictions on their eventual operations; they must remain entirely subordinate to the military requirements. But the consequences of the war could be confined beforehand within certain limits agreed upon. The Russian Government could give at that moment the assurance that if the neutrality of the Powers was maintained, and the Porte sued for peace before the Russian armies had crossed the Balkans, the Emperor would agree not to pass that line. In that case peace might be concluded on the following terms:—Bulgaria up to the Balkans to be made an autonomous vassal province under the guarantee of Europe. The Turkish troops and officials to be removed from it, and the fortresses disarmed and razed. Self-government to be established in it, with the support of a national militia to be organized as soon as possible. The Powers to agree to assure to that part of Bulgaria which was to the south of the Balkans, as well as to the other Christian provinces of Turkey, the best possible guarantees for a regular administration. Montenegro and Serbia to receive an increase of territory, to be determined by common agreement. Bosnia and Herzegovina to be provided with such insti-

tutions as might by common consent be judged compatible with their internal state, and calculated to guarantee them a good indigenous administration. These provinces being situated contemporaneously with Austria-Hungary, gave the latter a right to a preponderating voice in their future organization. Serbia, like Bulgaria, to remain under the suzerainty of the Sultan; the relations of the suzerain and the vassals to be defined in a manner to prevent disputes. As regarded Roumania, which had just proclaimed its independence, the Emperor of Russia was of opinion that that was a question which could not be settled except by a general understanding. If these conditions were accepted, the different Cabinets would be able to exercise a collective pressure on the Porte, warning it that if it refused, it would be left to take the consequences of the war. If the Porte sued for peace and accepted the terms enumerated above before the Russian armies crossed the line of the Balkans, Russia would agree to make peace, but reserved to herself the right of stipulating for certain special advantages as compensation for the costs of the war. These advantages would not exceed the portion of Bessarabia ceded in 1856, as far as the northern branch of the Danube (that is to say, the delta formed by the mouths of that river would remain excluded), and the cession of Batoum, with adjacent territory. In that case Roumania could be compensated by a common agreement, either by the proclamation of its independence, or, if it remained a vassal State, by a portion of the Dobrudscha. If Austria-Hungary on her side demanded compensation, either for the extension acquired by Russia or as a security against the new arrangements above mentioned for the benefit of the Christian Principalities in the Balkan Peninsula, Russia would not oppose her seeking such compensation in Bosnia and partly in Herzegovina. Such were the bases to which his Majesty the Emperor of Russia would give his consent with a view of establishing an understanding with England and with Europe, and of arriving at a speedy peace. Count Schouvaloff said he was authorized to sound Lord Derby ("*pressentir l'opinion*") on the subject of these conditions of peace, without concealing from him the value which the Russian Cabinet attached to a good understanding with the Cabinet of London. To resume, if the Porte sued for peace, and accepted the above terms before the Russian armies crossed

the Balkans, the Emperor would consent not to press the operations of war any further. If the Turkish Government refused, Russia would be obliged to pursue the war until the Porte was forced to agree to peace. In that case the terms of the Imperial Cabinet might be altered. In thus indicating with perfect openness the object which the Emperor had in view, and which he would not exceed so long as the war was confined to the north of the Balkans, his Majesty offered a means of localizing the war, and preventing the dissolution of the Turkish Empire; but it was important for the Emperor to know if, within the limits pointed out, he could count upon the neutrality indicated by the English Government—a neutrality which would exclude even a temporary occupation of Constantinople and the Straits by Russia.

Lord Derby said that Count Schouvaloff could not expect to receive from him an answer to proposals so important as the above, and that he would confer on the subject with his colleagues. In the course of a confidential conversation which he had with Count Schouvaloff on June 11, on the subject of this communication, he told him that even assuming that her Majesty's Government were prepared to assent to the terms proposed, as to which he must for the present abstain from expressing any opinion, it did not follow that those terms would be accepted at Constantinople. Lord Derby also pointed out that so long as it had been supposed by the advisers of the Porte that England was ready to take arms in defence of Turkey, English influence at Constantinople was naturally very great; but the attitude of neutrality which the English Government thought it right to assume in regard to the war had necessarily affected their position in that respect. They might be advisers, but they could no longer speak with the authority which belonged to protectors.

Count Schouvaloff answered that the object of his Government in the communication which they had made was, not so much that her Majesty's Government should use their endeavours to press upon Turkey the conditions of peace referred to, but rather to insure the neutrality of England by the evidence thus afforded of the moderation of their intended demands. As regarded the Porte, he had no expectation that the conditions proposed, moderate as they might be, would be accepted, until the Turkish Government had learned by a painful experience how inadequate

their means of resistance were. Count Schouvaloff also observed that, with a view to obviate the ill effects which might be produced by any casual and partial publication of the proposal, Prince Gortschakoff had furnished it, in the strictest confidence, both to Count Andrassy and to Prince Bismarck, and he more than once expressed his conviction that nothing was to be apprehended from the opposition of any Continental Power.

On the following day, June 12, Lord Derby telegraphed the proposed Russian terms to Mr. Layard, and asked whether in his judgment there was any probability of the Porte agreeing to them? If not, any attempt at mediation in the then state of affairs seemed useless.

Mr. Layard telegraphed in reply, that in his opinion there was no probability whatever of the Porte agreeing to the terms; and that it would be even dangerous to suggest them to the Sultan or to his ministers at that moment. The Turkish Government would feel that to form Bulgaria as far as the Balkans into a vassal autonomous province under the guarantee of Europe, the Turkish troops and functionaries to be withdrawn, and the Turkish fortresses on the Danube to be disarmed and razed, would not only be to lay the foundation for the speedy and complete independence of the new province, but of its union with Servia and the other Slav provinces, and the inevitable extension of Russian influence and rule over the whole Slav Christian populations of Turkey in Europe; that to consent to the destruction of the Turkish fortresses on the Danube, and the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the new province, would be to give up the main line of defence of Turkey in Europe, and to place the rest of that Empire, and Constantinople itself, at the mercy of Russia; and that to establish self-government in this province, with the support of a national militia, would infallibly bring about these results. The Turkish Government would be convinced that Greece—foreseeing that to create a semi-independent Bulgarian Principality (for such the new province would be) must sooner or later lead to the annexation to it of the provinces south of the Balkans in which there was a Bulgarian population—would take measures at once to invade Thessaly and Epirus, and to raise the Greek population in Macedonia, with a view to securing them from ultimate absorption with Bulgaria; that the Hellenes would be supported by Europe, and that a fresh dismember-

ment of the Empire would then take place. The Sultan and his ministers would further fear the effect upon all the Mussulman populations of the Turkish Empire of handing over to Christian government and influence a large Mahometan population. Such would inevitably be the result of forming Bulgaria north of the Balkans into an autonomous State. If the Sultan were to consent to this under present circumstances it would most probably cost him his throne, if not his life. Such was the exasperation of the Porte against Servia and Montenegro, and such its conviction that it was about to subdue the latter principality, that no proposals at that moment for any augmentation of territory to either of them would, Mr. Layard was convinced, be listened to, except it were some trifling cession to Montenegro. With the augmentation of territory to Montenegro and Servia, Bosnia and Herzegovina would probably be cut off from the rest of Turkey in Europe, and with the new institutions to be given to those provinces the Porte would consider them as practically lost to the Turkish Empire. To the independence of Roumania the Porte would not probably make any very serious objection, but would appeal to the Powers who signed the Treaty of Paris. She would not, Mr. Layard believed, listen at that moment to any proposal for the cession of part of the Dobrudscha to Roumania. The cession of Batoum, with adjacent territory, to Russia would be considered by the Porte as handing over to her the key of Armenia and of all Asia Minor; and moreover Batoum was still held by the Turkish arms. To add to all the concessions mentioned, the Porte might, as suggested by Russia, be called upon to give compensation to Austria in Bosnia and part of Herzegovina. No one who was in the least acquainted with the present temper of the Turkish Government and people, with the exasperation which was slowly gaining ground amongst the Mussulmans of the Empire, and with the means that they still had of inflicting incalculable injuries upon the Christian population, would, he felt sure, hesitate to declare that nothing but the direst necessity would induce the Porte even to listen to these conditions. There was not a Turk who would not see in them the dismemberment and destruction of the Ottoman Empire. No Sultan, no Minister, would dare even to entertain them.

Mr. Layard added, that he believed it would be

highly dangerous for England, or any other Power, to suggest such conditions to the Turkish Government, much more to propose them. However secretly they were placed before the Sultan or his Ministers, they would soon become known, and there was a powerful party in the palace, supported by the old fanatical Mussulman party outside, averse to peace, and determined to carry on the war to the very end. They were desperate men, and would shrink from no measures should they believe that terms were about to be imposed upon Turkey which would lead to the fall of the Empire, a general persecution of the Mahometan religion, and to the ultimate extermination of those who professed it in the European dominions of the Sultan. Whether those fears would be well founded or not, they would prevail; and although he was very far from being an alarmist, he could scarcely doubt that they would end in frightful massacres. So far the Turkish Government had managed to keep the spirit of fanaticism under control, and had succeeded in maintaining a friendly feeling between Mussulmans and Christians, and in restoring the confidence of the latter, especially in Europe. But it could not continue to do so if the Mussulmans were once induced to believe that their property, their faith, and their very lives were in jeopardy. He therefore thought it would be highly undesirable, if not actually dangerous to her interests, for England to suggest to the Porte the acceptance of such terms as those proposed by Russia. Any influence she might still possess there, and which might hereafter be usefully and powerfully employed in the interests of peace, would, in his opinion, be utterly destroyed if she were to do so. The English would be looked upon as greater enemies to Turkey and to Islamism than Russia herself—as false friends and traitors. The observations he had made applied to the present state of affairs. Were Russia over the Danube and at the Balkan Passes, and were she in possession of Armenia, there might be grounds for forming a different opinion to that which he had expressed; but it must be remembered that so far the Russians had gained no very signal victories, and the Porte was still under the impression (however ill-founded) that it could resist the Russian advance with fair prospects of success.

On June 14 the Russian ambassador communicated to Lord Derby the substance of a telegram

which he had received from Prince Gortschakoff, to the effect that, after a mature examination of the situation on the spot, Prince Gortschakoff had come to the conclusion that the separation of Bulgaria into two provinces would be impracticable. Local information proved that Bulgaria must remain a single province, otherwise the most laborious and intelligent part of the Bulgarian population, and notably that portion which had most suffered from Turkish maladministration, would remain excluded from the autonomous institutions.

Some conversation ensued, in the course of which Lord Derby told Count Schouvaloff—but as a personal opinion only—that in his judgment the Turkish Government were not likely to have accepted the terms proposed in the first instance, except under absolute pressure of necessity, and that the very important modification now introduced rendered their acceptance still more improbable.

Four days later (June 18) Lord Derby had another confidential conversation with the Russian ambassador, when Count Schouvaloff reverted to the subject of the terms of peace put forward by his Government. He asked Lord Derby whether he was prepared, or whether he wished, to express any opinion in regard to them on behalf of her Majesty's Government. Lord Derby said that he did not understand them to have been put before him with a view to any present expression of opinion, and before he could give one it would be necessary that he should consult his colleagues, which he was ready to do if Count Schouvaloff thought it desirable. Lord Derby added, however, that in his personal judgment it seemed impossible to expect that the Porte should consent to the proposals until reduced to the last extremity. He thought it would be better under the circumstances that Count Schouvaloff should not, unless expressly instructed to do so, ask for an official reply to his communication, and to this he agreed. It was understood on both sides that the conversation was of a purely personal and unofficial character.

In replying to Mr. Layard, on June 23, Lord Derby said that Her Majesty's Government had no intention of instructing him either to propose the Russian conditions of peace to the Porte or to support them. They were communicated to him for his confidential information only, and in order

that he might report his observations on them to her Majesty's Government.

Mr. Layard's despatch of June 13, of which we have already given the substance, was written hurriedly; and in a further despatch—dated June 19, and written after he had received a telegram from Lord Derby informing him of Prince Gortschakoff's conclusion with respect to the impracticability of separating Bulgaria into two provinces—Mr. Layard entered more fully into the subject. He said the Russian Chancellor now appeared to demand the formation into one vassal autonomous province of the whole of Turkey in Europe inhabited by Bulgarians. The limits to be assigned to this province could only then be a matter of conjecture, but they might be made to include the vilayet of Adrianople, and that of Salonica down to the Ægean Sea. If there were good reasons for believing that Turkey would not accept the terms of peace as first proposed by Prince Gortschakoff, except after defeats and disasters which would leave her at the absolute mercy of her enemy, there were still stronger grounds for the conviction that nothing but the extremest necessity would induce her to listen to the further condition now suggested. The formation of the provinces north and south of the Balkans into one vassal autonomous province, with the withdrawal from them of the Turkish troops and functionaries, and the abandonment and destruction of the Turkish fortresses on the Danube, would be, in fact, the end of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. It would take but little time to convert this so-called "vassal autonomous province" into a semi-independent principality or state. Its complete severance from Turkey would then be but a question of a few years. Like Serbia and Roumania, it would become a mere dependency of Russia, to be annexed when necessary or convenient. With the creation of this vassal autonomous province, the remainder of the territories of Turkey in Europe must be lost to her. Bosnia and Herzegovina would be completely cut off from Constantinople both by sea and by land, unless, which was altogether improbable, a right of way would be left for Turkish troops through the new Bulgaria. These two provinces would either be formed into another vassal autonomous state, or would be divided between Austria, Serbia, and Montenegro, as Prince Gortschakoff evidently foreshadowed.

Greece would be compelled to demand the annexation of Thessaly and Epirus, and would, no doubt, make a desperate struggle to obtain at least such part of Macedonia as would prevent her being altogether cut off from Constantinople, to the ultimate acquisition of which the hopes of the whole Hellenic race were directed. But Russia had been working for many years to bring the whole of Macedonia, and especially Mount Athos, within the boundaries of Slavism. She would probably, therefore, resist all attempts on the part of Greece to acquire territory so necessary to the development of the Slave race to the south, and without which the new Russo-Bulgarian Principality would be deprived of access to the Mediterranean. The policy of Russia with regard to Greece had of late years been altogether changed, and the Greeks knew full well that they had been abandoned by her for the more useful Slaves. What would remain to the Sultan but Constantinople and a part of ancient Thrace? How long could he hope to retain even this fragment of his European Empire, with the Danube, the Balkans, Varna, and every port in the Black and Ægean seas in the hands of his irresistible enemy? Could Turkey believe that any conditions or treaties, however solemn or stringent, imposed by Europe upon the new vassal autonomous provinces would be observed? She had learnt by experience how far such engagements, whatever might be their character or their guarantees, were respected by such semi-independent states themselves, and by Russia, and by Europe, whenever it was to the interest of either to override them. While she had been held to the strict observance of the treaty obligations to her vassal states, they had been allowed to violate theirs with impunity. Servia, treated by her with rare moderation and generosity after a disastrous defeat, took the first opportunity to throw over a treaty entered into a few months before, and sent her Prince to the Emperor of Russia, at war with her suzerain, to ask leave to join in it, and to visit Prince Charles, who was in open rebellion to the Sultan. Roumania, after having secretly entered into a convention with Russia against Turkey, with cynical audacity accused her of aggressive designs on the Principality, and declared her independence in the teeth of European treaties and of her conventions with the Porte. With the experience of the past,

could Turkey agree, except when utterly prostrate at the feet of Russia, to such terms as were now proposed by Prince Gortschakoff?

Mr. Layard continued that, in his previous despatch he had given some of the reasons why, in his opinion, it would be even dangerous to hint at the proposed Russian terms to the Turkish Government. What they had to fear was the effect upon the Sultan, his Ministers, his Government, and his people of telling them, or even of leading them to believe, that they were about to be driven out of Europe—for in such, and in no other light, would they view Prince Gortschakoff's terms. They would in all probability be thrown into a state of reckless despair. He would venture to urge most earnestly upon her Majesty's Government not to be the medium of communicating, or of suggesting, any such terms as those proposed by Prince Gortschakoff to the Sultan or to the Porte. The Russian Chancellor's language did not admit of the possibility of a mediation. It was simply that of dictation. The terms offered were to be accepted at once, or the consequences would be a further dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Let some other Power accept this task. It was vital to England's gravest interests—to interests the importance of which no words could adequately describe, much less exaggerate—that she should be ready to interpose to save the Turkish Empire from complete dissolution. "If we have even determined to abandon it to its fate, we have not determined to abandon to the same fate the highest interests of the British Empire. Surely the policy which has hitherto made us support Turkey for our own purposes and safety, and for no abstract love of Turks or their faith, a policy approved and adopted by the greatest statesmen that England has produced, is not one which the events of the last few months, having no relation whatever to it, are sufficient to reverse. That policy was partly based upon the belief that Turkey is a barrier to the ambitious designs of Russia in the East, and that the Sultan, the acknowledged head of the Mahometan faith, is a useful, if not necessary ally to England, who has millions of Mussulmans among her subjects. He may be deprived of his Empire, and reduced to the condition of a fifth-rate Asiatic potentate; but he will still be the Caliph of Islam, and the Mussulman world in a struggle for their existence may turn upon England as the principal cause of the danger that threatens it."

Mr. Layard added that he was aware that some persons were disposed to treat this consideration lightly; but he was persuaded that it was one which England ought seriously to bear in mind. It was scarcely necessary to dwell upon the result of the breaking up and partition of the Ottoman Empire on the balance of power, or upon the great danger to liberty and civilization of the establishment of a vast military Slave empire in the East of Europe. If her Majesty's Government were of opinion that there was nothing to be done to oppose the designs of Russia, England should at least be prepared to mediate when the time came. In order to be in a position to do so, she should make Turkey feel that although, as she had warned her, she could not expect any help in her struggle with Russia, she would be ready at a favourable moment to do her best to see that she was treated with justice and moderation, and her Mahometan and Christian subjects alike with impartiality and equal humanity. "It has been," said Mr. Layard, "my object to raise such hopes, as I have none others to give, without committing in any way her Majesty's Government, whose views and policy it is my duty to consider and carry out. It is the only course left to us, if we are not prepared to give Turkey even such indirect aid as the preservation and maintenance of our own national and imperial interests may render necessary. By following it, we may recover and maintain a part of that great influence which England once enjoyed among the Mussulman and even Christian nations and communities of the East, and which she was able to use most effectively for their good and her own. I have considered it my duty to place these considerations thus frankly before her Majesty's Government. It appears to me that England has one of three courses to pursue—either to prevent the accomplishment of the designs of Russia by decisive measures, or by holding at once such language to her, as will make her understand that we are prepared to prevent, if possible, the destruction and partition of the Ottoman Empire, or to let matters take their course until a favourable moment comes for stepping in as an impartial mediator prepared to save Turkey from too onerous and fatal terms; or to fold our arms and do nothing—leaving everything to chance. I will not add the other alternative—that of proposing terms to Turkey which would cause her the utmost indignation,

resentment, and despair, and which would only confirm the distrust and suspicion she has already been led, by the successful intrigues of Russia, to feel of England. There is a party in Turkey favourable to peace. I believe that the Sultan might be induced to make considerable sacrifices to put an end to a destructive and cruel war. But when I wrote my despatch of May 30 to your Lordship (see page 412), suggesting that the present relative position of the belligerents might afford an occasion for mediation, I could scarcely have foreseen, after all the assurances of moderation and disinterestedness which Russia had given, that she would insist upon such terms as those proposed by Prince Gortschakoff as the *sine quâ non*—terms which, when impartially examined by the light of past history and events, can only be intended to lead to the partition of Turkey in Europe, and the speedy dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. In the foregoing remarks I have not touched on the enormous difficulties of forming one vassal autonomous province out of the districts inhabited by Bulgarians to the north and south of the Balkans, of finding a governor for it, who, it is to be presumed, is to be a Christian, and not necessarily a Turkish subject; of dealing with the Mussulman population that are to be placed under him, and of devising a scheme of administration that will provide for the security of the property and for the religious freedom of Mahometans. In these questions alone there are the seeds of inevitable discord, wars, and may be massacres. They alone may afford pretexts for future interference, total independence, and ultimate annexation. It must be remembered that the new Bulgarian vassal province, with its large Mussulman population, will be very different from Roumania and Servia when they received their semi-independence. The former had no Mahometans to embarrass her; the latter soon disposed of the few she had to deal with. I have referred in this despatch to that branch of the subject which is more immediately connected with larger matters, and with the Imperial interests of England. The other branch is, however, scarcely of less importance."

On July 28 Lord Derby asked Mr. Layard to sound the Sultan on the subject of possible terms of peace, and added:—Should His Majesty be disposed to open negotiations, you may assure him that he may rely upon the friendly offices of her Majesty's Government, which will be exerted with

a view to obtain for him the most favourable terms possible under the circumstances; but her Majesty's Government are not disposed to take the initiative in proposing any conditions.

To this despatch Mr. Layard replied on August 2, to the effect that he had had means of ascertaining secretly whether the Sultan would be disposed to consider overtures for bringing the war with Russia to an end. He could state with some confidence that his Majesty could not, under present circumstances, either propose or listen to any conditions of peace. The Sultan's Ministers and others who had influence on the country were now so much encouraged by the recent successes obtained by the Turkish armies over the Russians, that they felt confident that the enemy would be ultimately repulsed. The manner, too, in which the Russians were stated to be carrying on the war had exasperated the Mussulmans, and had indisposed them to entertain any proposals for peace which Russia was likely to make or to accept. Mr. Layard added, that he had given the Sultan to understand that her Majesty's Government were not disposed to take the initiative in making any proposals for the termination of the war, but that, should a favourable opportunity offer for opening negotiations for peace, he might rely upon their friendly offices to obtain for him the most favourable conditions that could be expected under the circumstances, and he was of opinion that nothing more could then be done by Great Britain in the interest of peace.

From another Parliamentary Paper, also published in February, 1878, it then further became known for the first time that on July 20 the Emperor of Russia authorized Colonel Wellesley to state to the British Government that, notwithstanding recent successes, and though of course his Majesty could not suspend military operations, he was ready to treat for peace if the Sultan would make suitable propositions.

In a memorandum communicated to the Russian ambassador on July 28, the Government said they would be ready to use their influence, in concert with the other Powers, to induce the Porte to terminate the war by acceding to such terms of peace as should be at once honourable to Russia, and yet such as the Sultan could accept.

They added that they looked with much anxiety at the state of things in Constantinople, and the prospect of the disorder and bloodshed, and even

anarchy, which might occur there as the Russian forces drew nearer to the capital. The crisis which might at any moment arrive in Constantinople might be such as her Majesty's Government could not overlook, while they had the means of mitigating its horrors. Her Majesty's Government did not consider they would be departing from the neutrality which they had declared their intention to observe, and they thought that Russia would not consider they were so doing, if they should find themselves compelled to direct their Fleet to proceed to Constantinople, and thus afford protection to the European population against internal disturbance. No decision in favour of such a proceeding had been taken by her Majesty's Government; but they were anxious that, in the event of its becoming necessary, no misunderstanding should arise as to their intentions, and that the Government of Russia, with which it was their sincere desire to remain on friendly terms, should not be taken by surprise.

When Colonel Wellesley was taking leave of the Emperor of Russia at Biela, on the 29th July (the day before the second battle of Plevna was fought), his Majesty made certain remarks to him with the view of their being communicated to the British Government. After the interview Colonel Wellesley made a short memorandum of these observations and submitted it to the Emperor, who informed him it was correct, and requested to be furnished with a copy of it. The following was the memorandum, and the reason of its publication in February, 1878—when the Russians were close to Constantinople—was that it bore so pointedly on the situation at that time.

“BIELA, BULGARIA, *July 17-29, 1877.*

“His Majesty the Emperor, in consequence of the false reports current in England respecting alleged Russian atrocities, thought it might be useful for me to report personally to her Majesty's Government the true state of affairs.

“In an interview which I had before my departure his Majesty was pleased to make the following remarks to me, and at the same time authorized me to communicate them to my Government.

“His Majesty repeated what he had already said to Lord A. Loftus at Livadia, and to myself at Simnitza.

“The object of the present war was solely the amelioration of the condition of the Christian population of Turkey.

"The conditions of peace required by the Emperor are those lately communicated to Lord Derby by Count Schouvaloff, and will remain the same as long as England maintains her position of neutrality; if, however, England abandons that position, matters will have entered a new phase.

"His Majesty has no ideas of annexation beyond that, perhaps, of the territory Russia lost in 1856, and perhaps that of a portion of Asia Minor.

"The Emperor will not occupy Constantinople for the sake of military honour, but only if such a step is rendered necessary by the march of events.

"His Majesty is ready to enter into negotiations for peace, if suitable propositions are made by the Sultan; but mediation in favour of Turkey could not be entertained.

"Europe will be invited to a Conference for the final settlement of the conditions of peace.

"The Emperor has not the slightest wish or intention in any way to menace the interests of England, either with regard to Constantinople, Egypt, the Suez Canal, or India.

"With respect to India, his Majesty not only considers it impossible to do so, but an act of folly if practicable.

"His Majesty assures me that the Triple Alliance was formed for the preservation of peace, and without any idea of aggression or of offence to England, with which country his Majesty has every desire to remain on friendly terms.

"A temporary occupation of Bulgaria will be necessary.

"His Majesty has never entertained hostile feeling towards England, nor has he desired to give her offence; but if one is determined to *chercher midi à quatorze heures*, it is easy to take offence at anything.

"The Emperor fears that the present policy of England only tends to encourage the Turks and consequently to prolong the war, and considers that if English influence were brought to bear on the Porte, the Sultan would come to terms, and thus a war, regretted and felt by all Europe, would be brought to a speedy conclusion."

In a memorandum for Colonel Wellesley, dated August 14, the British Government stated that they had considered the communication brought by him from the Emperor with all the attention which its importance deserved. They had received

with satisfaction the statement made by his Majesty as to the object of the war in which he was engaged, his disclaimer of any extensive ideas of annexation, and his readiness to enter into negotiations for peace. They were also grateful for the assurance which he had given of his intention to respect the interests of England.

It was the earnest desire of the British Government to contribute to the re-establishment of peace, and in the meanwhile they had no intention of departing from that attitude of strict, though conditional, neutrality which they had hitherto observed. They would gladly use whatever influence they possess at Constantinople to encourage a pacific disposition on the part of the Sultan and his advisers. They could not, however, admit that, as appeared to be supposed by the Emperor, "the present policy of England tends to encourage the Turks and consequently to prolong the war." They feared that the influence which they were enabled to exercise on the counsels of the Porte was far less than his Majesty seemed disposed to ascribe to them. So long as the Porte thought fit to expect the military support of England, it was natural that English advice should be sought with eagerness and received with deference; but under the contrary circumstances that now prevailed at Constantinople, the position of the English Government in Turkish opinion was no longer that of protectors who must be conciliated at any cost, but of neutrals from whom neither assistance nor hostility was to be anticipated. Further, it did not appear to her Majesty's Government that the present juncture was one which offered a favourable opening for the commencement of negotiations. The military events which had occurred since the date of the communication made by the Emperor to Colonel Wellesley [chiefly their success at Plevna] would necessarily indispose the Turkish Government to entertain any propositions of peace, except on conditions such as it was unlikely that the Russian Government would accept.

Her Majesty's Government, however, would bear in mind the communication with which they had been honoured; and the Emperor might rest assured that they would lose no opportunity which appeared to them suitable to assist in the restoration of peace.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Fears of the Turks dispelled by the Retreat of General Gourko's Force from the South of the Balkans—Suleiman Pasha's Decision to operate against the Shipka Pass—Number and Character of his Army—The Russian Garrisons in the Balkan Passes—General Radetzky deceived by Feint Attacks—Movements of the Turks before Shipka—The Defiles leading from Tirnova to the Shipka Pass—Description of the various Sections—General Survey of the Fortress—The Russian Intrenched Camp—Disadvantages of the Shipka Position—Turkish Attack on the Village of Shipka—Retirement of the Bulgarians—Advance on the Pass, and Failure of the Attack—General Stoletoff's dispositions to meet the renewed Attack—Construction of a Turkish Battery—Attack by the Main Army of Suleiman Pasha—Opening of the Turkish Battery on Mount Berdek, and Attack on the South Front of the Russian Position—Gallant Conduct of the Orak Regiment, and Failure of the Turks—Suleiman's "Plan"—Attack on the West of Mount St. Nicholas—Intrepid Advance of the Turkish Nizams—Timely Arrival of the Briansk Regiment—Activity of Turkish Marksmen—Assault on the Steel Battery, and Repulse by the Russians—Failure of Ten Successive Assaults on the Russian Position—A Night Attack—Failure of the Last Effort—Preparations for an Attack on all sides on August 23—Flanking Columns Advanced by Suleiman Pasha—Canonade by the Turkish Batteries—The Attack on the East repulsed by the Bulgarian Battalions—The Assault on the South Front repulsed by the Russians—Furious Attack of the Turks upon Mount Berdek—The Position Outflanked—Critical Condition of General Stoletoff's Army—Continuous Attacks on Mount Berdek—Incidents of the Fight—The Russians begin to Retire—Frightful Losses and Failure of Ammunition—Renewed Efforts of Suleiman Pasha—A Dramatic Moment—Message of the Russian Generals—Arrival of General Radetzky's Advance Guard, and Reinforcement of the Russian Army—The March of General Radetzky—The Turks Disheartened—General Stoletoff relieved by General Radetzky—Failure of the Turkish Attack on the Left—Dangers in the Rear—Gallant Attack by General Radetzky—Heavy Losses—The Russian Position still Critical—Turkish Redoubts on the Russian Flanks—Arrival of Reinforcements and Supplies—Fighting renewed on the 24th—Another Assault on Mount St. Nicholas by Suleiman Pasha—Varying Successes—The Turks on Mount Aikiridjebel—Arrival of General Dragomiroff—Terrific Fight in the Woods—Brave Conduct of the Bulgarian Peasants—Assault by General Radetzky—Partial Success of the Russians—Failure of the Attack by the Turks on Mount Aikiridjebel—The Losses of the day—Arrival of the Volemsky Regiment and Relief of the Bulgarian Legion—The Turkish Positions on Mount Boisé—Death of General Derojinsky—A Turning Movement by General Radetzky—Commencement of the Fight of the 25th—Unsuccessful Attack upon a Turkish Redoubt—Simultaneous Attack on Mount Boisé—Flight of the Turks from their Advanced Positions—Failure of the Russian Pursuit—Fighting continued throughout the Night—Impetuous Attacks by the Turks—Exhaustion of the Russian Reserves—Count Adlerberg retreats from Mount Boisé—Description of the Night Scene by an Eye Witness—The Dead and Wounded—The Troops Exhausted—The Six Days' Battle—One Hundred Separate Attacks—Losses of the Russians—Losses of the Turks—Treatment of the Wounded—Suleiman Pasha Reinforced—Visit of General Nepokoitchitzki to the Russian Positions—Reduction of the Russian Garrison—New Plans of Suleiman Pasha—Arrival of Siege Guns and Mortars—A Renewal of Attacks ordered by the Seraskierat in September—A Night Attack—The Advance of the First Column discovered by the Russians—Appearance of the Second Column, and Surprise of the Russians—Arrival of the Third Column, after Severe Fighting, and the Loss of its Commander—The Three Turkish Columns on Mount St. Nicholas—"Shipka is Ours!"—Premature Announcement of the Capture by Suleiman Pasha—Gallant Resistance of the Russians—Death of Prince Mestchersky—Position of the Turkish Volunteers on Mount St. Nicholas—The Crisis—Fatal delay of Redjib Pasha—Supreme Effort of the Russians and Defeat of the Turks on Mount St. Nicholas—General Observations on the Causes of the Failure of the Turkish Attack—Losses on both Sides—Panic in the Turkish Camp on the 18th—Opinions on the Conduct of the Turkish Officers—Operations from the 21st to the 27th September—Sickness and Disease among the Turkish Troops—Death and Burial of Lieutenant Layard—Difficulties of the Turkish Army—Comforts for the Russians—Suleiman dispersed by Raouf Pasha.

THE defeat of General Gourko by the army of Suleiman Pasha, and the retreat of the Russians into the Passes of the Balkans, revealed the weakness of the Russian advance; and the fear that had been felt by the Turks of a swift descent upon Adrianople, and from thence to Constantinople, was fully dispelled. The battles before Eski Saghra took place on the 31st of July, and the retreat of the Russian army was accomplished on the 1st of August. Had the Turkish commander been aware of the full extent of his victory, and pressed forward in pursuit of General Gourko, it is probable that the Russian force would have been destroyed. The weakness of the Russians, however, was not known to the Turks until

afterwards, and the precautions taken by General Gourko in covering his rear had enabled the retreat to be effected, and positions to be taken up behind the defences of the Hainkoi, the Elena, and the Shipka passes. The towns of Eski Saghra and Yeni Saghra were reoccupied by the Turks; but for a time no further advance was made, the Turkish commander being engaged in concentrating his forces, and in bringing up stores and supplies.

Important events had meanwhile occurred on the north side of the Balkans, in connection with the Russian Right at Plevna and the Russian Left on the banks of the Lom (the details of which are recorded in other chapters); and for a time

the plans of Suleiman Pasha seemed to be in suspense. The Russians had seized and now held three of the Passes of the Balkans; they also partially commanded the Triavna Pass; but all the other Passes remained in Turkish hands, and it would have been comparatively easy for Suleiman Pasha to have crossed the mountains and united his forces with those of Osman Pasha or Mehemet Ali, leaving behind a force sufficient to hold the exits of the Shipka and Hainkoi Passes against any further advance of the Russians. Subsequent events, it is true, proved that Osman Pasha was in no need of assistance at this period; but the troops under the command of Suleiman Pasha would have been of the greatest use to Mehemet Ali, the nominal commander-in-chief of the Turkish forces, who was at this time threatened by the army of the Czarewitch. The Demir Kapu or Iron Gate Pass was but about forty miles to the eastward of the position held by Suleiman Pasha, and it would at this time have been possible for him to have made his way across the mountains, and have effected a junction with Mehemet Ali without loss or difficulty. But even if Suleiman had been certain of not being supported by the other Turkish generals, it was still open to him to descend by some Pass situated more to the east, and, by marching along the north side, to render General Radetzky's position untenable. Suleiman, however, was apparently more occupied in maintaining and increasing his influence with the Government than in endeavouring to assure the decisive success of a campaign, the honour of which would have accrued to his rival. He knew that if he could succeed in retaking the Shipka Pass he should flatter the national pride, which had been profoundly humiliated by the loss of this position. The extreme fear which the Russians inspired, combined with ignorance of military matters, produced the idea at Constantinople that the evacuation of Shipka by the Russians was an indispensable condition of the security of the capital. Under these circumstances the popular favour attended Suleiman Pasha's attempt to retake it, and the responsibility of its failure was made to fall, not upon him to whose rashness it was due, but upon Mehemet Ali, the prudent generalissimo who had refused to second the operation.

The forces at this time under the command

of Suleiman Pasha amounted to about 40,000 men, 15,000 of whom were Nizams, or regular troops; the remainder being made up of the first and second reserves, Redifs and Moustaphiz, and irregular cavalry. The irregular cavalry, as described by an English officer with the Turks, consisted of men gathered together from the remotest parts of the Turkish Empire—Arnauts from Albania, Greek renegades from Thessaly, the scum of Smyrna and Alexandria, robbers from the Lebanon, Bedouins from Palmyra, Zeibecks from Widdin, and last, and yet first in blood-thirstiness and insatiable love of rapine, the Circassians and Georgians. By these men the whole country through which the Turkish army advanced was devastated—the villages being plundered, the inhabitants murdered, and the houses burnt and destroyed. The Turkish Commander, Suleiman Pasha, can hardly be held responsible for this wholesale burning of an entire district. He issued stringent orders to prevent the Bulgarian villages, which might have been of invaluable use to the Turkish army in the case of a winter campaign, from being set on fire by the irregulars; but from first to last, as has been already stated, they were found wholly indifferent to discipline.

The strength and position of the Russian forces in the Balkans at this period will be seen from the following official statement. On the 16th of August the 9th Division of infantry, holding the Balkans, was thus divided among the Passes:—

Those of Elena and Bebrova were guarded by the 34th Sievsk regiment of infantry, the 5th battery of the 14th brigade of artillery, and the 13th regiment of dragoons with two guns of the 20th battery of horse artillery—under the command of General Boreisha. That of Hainkoi was held by the 33rd regiment of infantry, the 6th battery of the 9th artillery brigade, the first mountain battery, and two sotnias of Cossacks.

The Shipka Pass was garrisoned by the 36th Orel regiment of infantry, the 2nd and 5th batteries of the 9th artillery brigade, six pieces of the second mountain battery, five battalions of the Bulgarian Legion, and five sotnias of Cossacks—under the orders of General Stoletoff.

The rest of the Division, that is, the 35th Briansk regiment, was at Selvi with the headquarters of Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky.

On the above date the operations of Suleiman

Pasha commenced. Some days before the English journals announced that the army of Adrianople was about to effect a junction with that of Mehemet Ali, and their spies informed the Russians of a large concentration of troops on the side of Slivno. In order to mislead the enemy, the Turkish General resolved to make a demonstration against the extreme Russian left, as if he had really the intention of passing the Balkans at this point and penetrating into Danubian Bulgaria. On the 16th six battalions of infantry and a mass of Circassian cavalry briskly attacked the Eletz regiment at the entrance of the Hainkoi defile, but without pressing it severely, and after some hours' musketry fire they beat a retreat, and did not return again to the attack.

At the same time a larger detachment crossed the Pass of Demir Kapu, encountered the advance-guard of General Boreisha, pushed it back as far as Bebrova, and in spite of the reinforcements successively sent, beat it again on the 17th before Bebrova, expelled it from that town, which was half burnt down by the Bashi-bazouks, and drove it back to Elena. General Radetzky, pressed by General Boreisha to send reinforcements, fell into the trap prepared for him by Suleiman Pasha, and thought that the whole Turkish army was about to outflank his left. From Bebrova there are two routes leading to Tirnova, one to the south through Elena and Prissova, the other more to the north, *viâ* Slatariska; the General immediately sent the 2nd brigade of the 14th Division and two battalions to Slatariska to cover the second, and taking the 14th brigade of chasseurs and two mountain guns, went in person to Elena. On arriving there he discovered his error; it was not the army of Suleiman Pasha that General Boreisha had to deal with, but a strong reconnaissance, composed of some regular troops and a large number of Bashi-bazouks. At the instigation of the latter the Mussulman population, which is in the majority at Elena, had risen, and the Russian garrison had been obliged to retire to some positions in the neighbourhood of the town. The Turkish troops retired in their turn on the arrival of the chasseurs. After having left instructions with General Boreisha, and sent to the 2nd brigade of the 14th Division the order to evacuate Slatariska and proceed to Tirnova, General Radetzky led back the 4th brigade of chasseurs to Prissova.

On the 18th of August, about ten o'clock in the morning, the garrison of Shipka noticed for the first time an extraordinary movement of troops in the direction of Kazanlik. A strong column of six battalions showed itself on the heights before the town, and thick clouds of dust indicated that these battalions were followed by other troops. In the afternoon the Turkish cavalry were seen to occupy the villages of Senovo and Yanina. Without suspecting the full extent of the danger which menaced him, General Stoletoff warned General Radetzky of the presence of the enemy's forces at Kazanlik. We have seen that at this moment the commander of the 14th Corps believed himself to be seriously attacked upon the left. However, before starting for Elena, he sent orders to the Briansk regiment to quit Selvi and proceed to reinforce the garrison of the Shipka Pass.

On the 19th the Russians saw dark and massive columns, with the morning sunlight dancing on their thousands of bayonets, emerge from the woods, accompanied by swarms of Turkish irregulars. The advance-guard installed itself at Senovo, whilst the main body deployed in its rear—the flank resting on Kazanlik. It soon became evident that the entire army of Suleiman Pasha was before Shipka, and that it was arrayed, not for the purpose of making a demonstration, but of attempting to gain possession of the Pass. The same day, about four o'clock in the afternoon, the Turkish forces deployed, and forty battalions could be distinctly counted in the plain to the south-east of Shipka, the right of which rested upon the village of Yanina. Some small columns of Turkish cavalry and infantry advanced towards the village of Shipka, and the Russian 9-pounders fired several shots at them to determine the range from Mount St. Nicholas.

In a previous chapter a brief description of the Shipka Pass has been given; but in order to rightly understand the nature of the terrific conflicts which took place for its possession, it is necessary to describe the position more in detail.

The defiles leading from Tirnova to Shipka may be resolved into five distinct sections. The first lies between Tirnova and Drenova; the second, between Drenova and Gabrova; the third, between Drenova and Triavna; the fourth, between Gabrova and Shipka; and the fifth, between Triavna

and Shipka. Advancing from Tirnova, the road follows the course of the Jantra, which soon issues from a narrow gorge through which it meanders in sluggish bends. This gorge, called Demir Kapu or Iron Gate, is not long; but the sides are steep and luxuriantly timbered, and it debouches into a marshy plain, formerly doubtless the basin of a lake formed by the Jantra before it had cut its way through the mountains to its present level. Shortly after issuing from this gorge the road passes over the Jantra by a bridge—Ozun-tehan Koprusi—and then follows the course of the river Drenovka, a tributary of the Jantra, which here makes a sudden bend to the west, or rather comes from the west. The road crosses and recrosses the Drenovka several times; sometimes running along the bed of the valley, sometimes curving round the hill sides, and at others crossing the heights, till it reaches Drenova, twelve miles from Tirnova. It is closed towards Tirnova by the above-mentioned gorge, the Demir Kapu, which, with the marshy plain lying before it, presents as strong an obstacle to any attack from the south as it is well possible to imagine. On the other hand, this section is open to an attack from the east by a branch of the road leading from Bebrova and Elena to Tirnova, which debouches into the Tirnova-Drenova road a mile south of Katrandjikoi, and ten miles south of Tirnova. To the west the road is unassailable.

At Drenova, a town of some 500 houses lying in the lowlands by the river side, one road comes from Starevka *via* Kaliferkoi, thus connecting the Drenova valley with the Hainkoi and Starevka Passes in the east; and another comes from Selvi and Lovatz. Drenova is thus an important position. Leaving Drenova, the second section commences. The road, instead of following the Drenovka, which here describes a wide curve open to the east, ascends through a well-timbered valley for about three miles to a considerable height, as a last view may here be obtained of Tirnova, fifteen miles away to the north. It then descends to the village of Kumanovey into the valley of a small tributary of the Drenovka, then ascends again after splitting into two branches—one running to Gabrova, the other to Triavna—and descending for the last time into the valley of the Drenovka at Kinytovey. Thence it runs in a curve, open to the west, across an undulating plateau of semi-barren rounded mountain backs,

interspersed with groups of oak and beech, and guarded by several stone and wooden Karauls, or guard-houses, till it descends into the valley of the Jantra to Gabrova, a town of 1300 houses on both sides of the river, which is spanned by four stone and two wooden bridges. This section of the road is open on the west to several roads leading from Selvi, and on the east it is connected by three or four with the Drenova-Triavna section. Gabrova itself is connected on the west by one road with Lovatz *via* Selvi, and by a second with Trojan *via* Novoselo. In the east, two roads unite it with Triavna.

The third section from Drenova to Triavna, which leaves the Drenova-Gabrova road at Kumanovey, runs through the narrow and precipitous valleys and gorges of the Drenovka and its affluent streams, and is separated from the Hainkoi Pass by rugged and impassable mountain masses, though a mule path connects it shortly before Triavna with the village of Vcelinskij Bjad, the "Shipka" of the Hainkoi Pass.

The fourth section—Gabrova-Shipka—brings us to the Pass over the highest part of the Balkans. Directly after leaving the town, the ascent commences in earnest, the road being overhung on both sides with dense foliage. Half an hour's ascent leads to the first plateau, or rather terrace, whence the road skirts the woods, thinned out towards the west for better protection from attack on the numerous guard-houses along the route, till a stiff winding ascent surmounts the hill 4400 feet above the sea. The passage is 2470 yards wide, and was formerly defended by three bastions, thus allowing of no longer a front for attack than that of 1000 men.

The fifth section, from Triavna to Shipka, runs through the valley of a mountain stream for about four miles, and then along the crest of the hills across a stony yet thickly wooded plateau, down a steep descent to the town of Shipka, which is approached from the east, west, and south by five roads—that is, one from Triavna, one from Tatar Bazardjik, one from Philippopolis, one from Kazanlik, and one from Hermankoi—whilst there is also a road leading through the romantic and narrow gorge of the Ketchi-Dere from Kazanlik, which joins the Triavna-Shipka road about half-way between the two places.

The Shipka Pass is not a Pass at all in the ordinary sense of the term. The name has been

given to it because at this point there is a section of the Balkans of less than the average height, the surface of which, from the Jantra valley on the north to the Tunja valley on the south, is sufficiently continuous, although having an extremely broken and serrated contour, to afford a foothold for a practicable track. What had been previous to the Russian advance a mere path, had by the employment of gangs of Bulgarian peasants, under the superintendence of Russian pioneers, been made a really good, although steep, high road. The ground on either side of the ridge is depressed sometimes into shallow hollows, sometimes into cavernous gorges; but these lateral depressions are broken, and have no continuity, otherwise they would have afforded a better track for a road than the high ground above.

When viewed from the plain on the Thracian side, in the valley of the Tunja, and towards the Shipka Pass, a dividing range of varying height is seen running parallel to the valley, about east and west. From this range descend into the plain spurs, which radiate, as it were, from the summit of the Pass, and form between them valleys of from 2000 to 4000 feet in depth, which in some places are thickly wooded, and in others are inaccessible from rocks and precipices. These spurs do not unite at any one point on the main dividing range, but are separated from the spur which carries the high road across the Balkans by extremely steep valleys of 400 to 500 feet in depth, and therefore afford no access into the valleys north of the Balkans. In consequence of this, the high road was flanked on either side behind the lateral depressions by a mountainous spur higher than itself, and therefore commanding it, and having as well the command of the ridge behind, while at the same time it constituted for an army the only practicable line of communication in this section of the Balkans.

From the side of the village of Shipka it is about an hour's march to the summit of the Pass, Mount St. Nicholas. Beyond this point the route descends gently, forming a narrow valley about 800 or 850 yards long, then rises to surmount the Tcherveni-Breg (red mountain), and immediately descends again by a tolerably gentle slope along the left side of the ravine of the Roscritza to within about a mile and a half of Gabrova.

After their capture of the Pass, the Russians

completed the Turkish fortifications and defended the position by seven massive redoubts armed with powerful artillery. On the south was the battery of Mount St. Nicholas, the key of the position, which it covered on all sides by its fire; and two batteries called "Turkish," because they were established upon the site of some trenches hastily dug by the Turks when General Gourko attacked them on the south. The nearer of these two batteries to Mount St. Nicholas was styled the "Steel Battery" in the Russian reports, because it was armed with the steel Krupp guns taken from the Turks. On the east was the "Round Battery," on the north the Turkish lunette, also so called because established on the site of an old Turkish work; and on the west was the redoubt of Mount Berdek and the "Green Battery." Later, on the 23rd of August, an eighth work was hastily constructed to the north of the others, near the store camp, in order to prevent the turning movement attempted by Suleiman Pasha.

These defences inclosed within them the little valley of which we have before spoken, which was thus turned into an intrenched camp. Here the garrison encamped under large substantial Turkish tents of conical shape, which had been found standing in the same place on the capture of the Pass. A guard-house and a "khan" which stood on the route were converted, the first into a dépôt for ammunition, and the second into an hospital.

The Shipka position has not so great a defensive strength as might be supposed, because it has two disadvantages equally serious. The first is that the mountains, from which it is separated to the right and left by deep ravines, dominate it; and as the garrison was much too weak to occupy the two heights, nothing was more easy than for the Turks to place some guns upon Mount Berdek on the east, and upon Mount Aikirdjebel on the west, and engage the Russian artillery with the advantage of position. The second disadvantage arises from the nature of the ground by which the position is reached, and which would seem at first sight to constitute an actual advantage. The strength of a position does not, however, depend entirely upon its difficulty of access to a direct attack, but upon the extent of ground which can be swept by its guns, and upon its means of concentrating fire upon points of critical importance; and Shipka is not able to dominate with its fire the network of lateral valleys and heights which

surround it. A brigade of infantry could be massed in a ravine at less than a hundred yards distant from the first Russian position out of reach of its artillery.

Against the above positions Suleiman Pasha advanced on the 20th of August, with the intention of taking them by a *coup de main*. Early in the morning of that day a fusillade was heard at the foot of the mountain between the Turkish advance-guard and some companies of Bulgarians charged with the defence of the village of Shipka. After some hours' fighting the Bulgarians retired towards the mountains, having inflicted numerous losses upon the enemy, made heavier by the assistance of the massive buildings and walled inclosures which abound in this village, to which the Turks on their entry immediately set fire. The thick columns of smoke, which went eddying towards the top of the heights, told the Russians of the destruction which had fallen upon this charming and picturesque locality. By ten o'clock the Turks had succeeded in throwing up a breast-work on a very steep hill which commanded the Russian position, and here, and on another hill a little more on the Russian left, they brought ten or eleven mountain guns into action. Whilst this was being accomplished a large force of Turks, consisting of three battalions of the 2nd brigade, and four battalions of the 3rd brigade, advanced up the road in face of a very heavy fire, and with very considerable loss. Arrived at a bend of the road the force was divided, and the 3rd brigade descended a ravine and made a rush for a position slightly sheltered, but to reach which they had to pass through a copse, where they encountered a large force of Russian infantry. The Turks then advanced on the Russian position; but when they arrived within 300 yards of the Russian batteries, the troops were brought to a standstill, and could advance no further, although for a time they held their ground in spite of a heavy fire. The Turks finally retired and established themselves behind the village, and placed their camp against three gigantic earthen tumuli, on the very spot where General Gourko's troops had encamped in July, just a month before.

In the fighting of this day the Turkish infantry behaved most bravely, advancing more than once in the very teeth of the Russian guns, but found it impossible to reach them; and on the other side the Russians stood their ground well,

but without making any attempt to move forward. The fight ceased shortly before sunset, the Turkish losses being estimated at about 800; the loss to the Russians on the first day's attack was 200, chiefly of the Bulgarian Legion.

Everything portended a renewed attack on the morrow, which the Russians awaited, keeping a careful watch. During the night the intentions of Suleiman Pasha became more and more evident. The 4th Bulgarian battalion, established as main-guard half-way between the Pass and the village, was exposed to incessant musketry fire, and compelled to fall back upon the Pass before day-break; and when morning came, one of the most desperate and exciting struggles began which it is possible to imagine.

General Stoletoff disposed his troops and distributed the command along the line of defence in the following manner:—

The 3rd battalion of the Orel regiment, with the 2nd battery of the 9th brigade of artillery, held Mount St. Nicholas and the "Steel" battery. The 1st battalion of the Orel regiment occupied some trenches on the right, and formed a support to the Centre and "Round" batteries, which had each four guns of the 5th battery of the 9th artillery brigade; the Round battery had in addition two pieces of the 10th Don horse artillery.

Two companies of the 2nd battalion of the Orel regiment were stationed on a mountain in advance of the right flank. The 2nd, 3rd, and 5th battalions of the Bulgarian Legion occupied the trenches on the left.

Three companies of the Orel regiment, the 1st and 4th Bulgarian battalions, and four pieces of the 2nd battery of mountain guns, formed the reserve. This was stationed on the place named the "Isthmus," between the houses nearest Mount St. Nicholas and the foot of that mountain.

The command of Mount St. Nicholas, which formed the advanced position, was intrusted to Colonel Count Tolstoi; that of the trenches on the left to Colonel Prince Viazemsky; that of the right flank and the base, which was then the principal position, to Colonel Depreradovitch, who on the arrival of the Briansk regiment resigned the command to the colonel of that regiment, Colonel Lipinsky.

From seven o'clock in the morning of the 21st red fezzes appeared on the left upon Mount Berdek.

The day promised to be very warm; the sky was magnificently clear, balsamic odours ascended from the surrounding woods; while from the bottom of the gorges came the murmur of water under the leaves, and the songs of the birds that the noise of battle had not yet frightened away. Death, which was about to reap such a harvest here, lost some of its terrors amidst this scene of rejoicing nature; and the Russians shut up in Shipka, not knowing whether the expected reinforcements would arrive, yet without for a moment losing heart, prepared for this terrible and unequal duel between a handful of men and an army.

The Turks commenced the construction of a battery upon Mount Berdek opposite the "Steel" battery. The Russians immediately opened fire upon the men at work, but could not stop their progress, and at ten o'clock in the morning four guns were in position.

Lieutenant Romanof, of the 7th battalion of engineers, had been commissioned early in the morning to place some fougasses upon the main road leading from the village to the Pass. These had scarcely been laid when the forty battalions of Suleiman Pasha formed columns of attack, and advanced with the greatest resolution along the road which commences at the end of the village. The two first stages of the ascent were accomplished with tolerable ease. The Turks, protected by the steep rocky mountain side, were sheltered from the artillery fire, and drove the Russian skirmishers before them. But, once arrived on the little plateau where stood an unfinished inn, their columns were obliged to advance across ground exposed and without shelter. Three redoubts and numerous trenches commanded this point; most of the cannon which armed these works consisted of the guns abandoned there by the Turks, and it was with missiles from their own artillery that they were received. The foremost ranks fell, literally cut down by this rain of fire, and at the same time frightful explosions were heard all along the road. These were the fougasses, which had been fired by means of electricity. Although the explosion took place too soon, it did much mischief among the Turks, and broke up the road so much that it was impracticable for the rest of the day.

At ten o'clock the four cannon placed upon the Berdek were brought into play, and the Turkish infantry deploying this time along the south front of the Russian position opened a terrible

fire of musketry. The Russians, on the other hand, well sheltered, took their time, husbanded their ammunition, and fired with steady aim. At the same time a strong column assaulted the little battery on the south-east, occupied by the 3rd tirailleur company of the Orel regiment; the column reached the foot of the redoubt, but could go no further. Reinforced by fresh troops, it charged furiously twice more, and twice again was repulsed by the company of the Orel regiment aided by a Bulgarian company detached from the reserve. At last it recoiled, leaving hundreds of dead upon the slope which it had in vain attempted to ascend.

Suleiman's plan, which was very simple, was, without troubling about the soldiers he might lose, to feel by successive assaults all the points of the position until he found the weak one, upon which he would have thrown his best regiments and forced the place. Repulsed before the battery on the south-east, he made an attempt at the other extremity of the front upon the western slope of Mount St. Nicholas. In spite of frightful losses, the intrepid Nizams whom he had brought from Montenegro dashed forward a deep and serried column, in which the shells fired point blank opened wide and bloody lanes; but the Turks held their ground with the utmost bravery, until at last, swept by an insupportable fire, impeded in their movements by the dead and wounded who broke the ranks and encumbered the path, they were obliged to retire. At this moment (half past eleven in the morning) the garrison of Shipka set up joyful "hurrahs" on seeing the arrival of the Briansk regiment, which was placed in reserve behind the Round battery. This regiment had marched nearly twenty-seven miles in one stage.

Without being discouraged, Suleiman Pasha, in pursuit of his fatal plan, in which the sacrifice of men was to take the place of the tactical preparations customary in such undertakings, sought a fresh point of attack. First, he placed along his whole front close lines of marksmen, who all the rest of the day covered with their fire, not only the works, but even the little valley in the rear, where the stray shots caused serious losses among the Russian reserves, which were from this cause really less sheltered than the troops in the intrenchments. Then forming another column for assault, Suleiman attacked the Steel battery upon the left flank of Mount St. Nicholas. The first

assault was delivered about mid-day. The Russians saw, with a pang of anxiety, large and dense masses of Turkish infantry descend by three lines from the neighbouring woods into the valley, which extends to the foot of the height on which the battery stood. They crossed the open space at a run, and scrambled up the mountain side to the sound of their drums beating the charge, and the cries, a thousand times repeated, of "Allah! Allah!" But in spite of the extraordinary energy and obstinacy with which they were led, they were repulsed by the murderous fire of the besieged.

Ten times in succession the columns reformed, and ten times they renewed with equal courage their impetuous attack. Suleiman Pasha continued to send fresh troops to carry on the assault. The brave Turkish soldiers struggled painfully up the steep ascent; at each foot gained the ranks grew thinner, until, when they got near the summit, of the dense column only a handful of men remained; then the survivors, discouraged by the magnitude of the task set before them, faltered and fell back in spite of the appeals of their officers. The carnage amongst the attacking columns was of the most fearful character. The most moderate calculations place the Turkish losses during this fatal day at 3000 men. Up to night-fall the Russians and Bulgarians, who on account of their small number fought without rest, heard incessantly the drums beating and the trumpets sounding the charge, and the wild cries of their assailants.

When night came the Turks had six guns in battery. They had occupied the heights of Aikirdjebel, and in spite of the fire of the Green battery, commanded by Captain Policarpof, placed two guns in position there. At eight in the evening, supposing the garrison of Shipka to be worn out by this frightful struggle of ten hours, Suleiman Pasha made a last effort. A strong column moved silently towards the Russian works; the foremost were just preparing to escalate the redoubt, when the sentinels, aided by the moonlight, perceived them, gave the alarm, and a brisk fusillade speedily cleared the approaches to the position.

This day had only cost the heroic garrison 200 men. That is, at least, the official number; and great as may be the contrast it presents with that of the Turkish losses, it is by no means incredible,

for it must not be forgotten that there was not during the whole day a single hand-to-hand struggle. The engagement was confined to a contest of artillery and musketry, in which the Russians were behind breast-works, and fired upon dense masses, where every shot told.

The troops of General Stoletoff were tired out, but they could only enjoy a very troubled repose. In spite of the heart-rending cries of the wounded Turks, who appealed for aid a few paces from the intrenchments near which they had fallen, the fusillade did not cease the whole night, for the Turks were constructing a new battery and digging trenches, two of which were only a hundred paces at most from the Russian positions. The Russian commander could not dream of making a sortie to disperse the workmen; he had too few men for that. He contented himself with repairing and strengthening the batteries and trenches under the protection of the reserves, especially that called the Steel battery, where the guns and men had been exposed the whole day, and the losses had been very heavy. All these works were executed under the persistent fire of the enemy.

The strength of the Russian positions had become manifest to the Turkish commander, and instead of crumbling away his army in successive assaults, he determined this time to include the whole position in one grand attack, and assaulting all sides simultaneously to, as it were, stifle the little Russian garrison under the weight of his 40,000 men. Accordingly, early on the 22nd he sent two columns into the mountains with orders to make their way by means of the lateral valleys on either side of the road (which have been before described), round to the right and left flanks of the Russian position. The nature of the country enabled the Turks to make these movements with comparative freedom; for while the fire of the Russian positions completely commanded the whole of the high road, it was unable to search the hollows to the right and left of it.

Early in the morning the Turks also opened a brisk fusillade from the new intrenchments they had constructed during the night, in front of the Russian positions. At times the fire from their artillery and tirailleurs was even more destructive than on the preceding day, as the number of their guns had been considerably increased; but the fact that the Turks, who were

in such overwhelming force, and who had attacked with so much impetuosity on the previous day, now attempted nothing decisive, but limited themselves to directing a violent artillery and infantry fire on the Russian positions, redoubled the confidence of the defenders—both officers and men—as it proved how much the fruitless attacks on the preceding day had cost their enemies. In the evening the companies of the Orel regiment, stationed in the Steel battery, were relieved by four companies of the 1st battalion of the Briansk regiment in charge of Captain Skorodinsky, the commander of the battalion. The poor Bulgarians, who had alone suffered almost the whole losses of the first day, stoically continued on duty.

During the night the Russians repaired their batteries, deepened their trenches, and dug new ones. Whilst these works were in progress Captain Maltsev arrived from Gabrova, with the welcome intelligence that General Radetzky and the 4th brigade of chasseurs would start at three o'clock in the morning to the assistance of their hard-pressed comrades.

Before daybreak on August 23 the cannonade, which had not ceased all night, burst out with tremendous violence. The Turks had now ten cannon upon Mount Berdek, and four upon the Aikirdjebel; by mid-day they had eight upon the latter point. At the same time, by the movements along the lateral valley on the previous day, the Ottoman army had stretched out, to use the ingenious illustration of the *Daily News* correspondent, like "the claws of a crab," to grip the Russian positions. One column filed off along the Berdek to turn the left, a detachment posted itself upon the south front, and the rest of the army directed itself upon the little village of Senovo. There, following a scarcely perceptible footpath by which the old garrison of Shipka had escaped, this column involved itself among the wooded mountains facing the right flank of the Russians, in order to turn the position on this side also, and unite in the rear with the forces coming from Mount Berdek, thus cutting the communications of the redoubts with Gabrova.

The Russian left was attacked by troops which ascended by two ravines situated on the east of the position. The 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Bulgarian battalions posted opposite these ravines, and reinforced by the orders of Colonel Count Tolstoi with two companies from the 1st and

4th Bulgarian battalions—sent from the Steel battery, under the command of Colonel Prince Viazemsky—received the assailants with a vigorous fire. During the day six battalions repeatedly attacked the trenches occupied by the Bulgarian battalions, and each time they were repulsed. When these brave fellows, enrolled for the deliverance of their country, who had already lost half their number at Eski Saghra, were relieved from their post in the evening, they had three-fourths of the remainder *hors de combat*.

On the south front, the Turks attempted the assault of the Steel battery four times, and were repulsed on each occasion with heavy loss. The Russians too, lost a great many men here; the Turkish musketry took them in flank and rear, and they were obliged to hastily dig several rows of trenches to shelter themselves. The rest, on account of the scarcity of ammunition, did not reply to the Turkish fire, and only fired in extreme need, when the attacking columns came near.

But the attempts made by the Turks upon the south front were nothing to the repeated assaults they delivered upon the flanks. There the positions had been placed under the command of Colonel Lipinsky, who occupied them as follows:—

The trenches near the Round battery were defended by some companies of the 2nd battalion of the Briansk regiment, with the 5th and 6th companies in reserve. A part of the 3rd battalion (the 10th and 12th companies, and half of the 3rd company of tirailleurs) occupied Mount Berdek, and the other companies were in the trenches on the right flank of the position, near the Green battery. The advanced trenches on this side were defended by the 11th company, and the isthmus near the hospital by three companies of the Orel regiment, placed like the neighbouring companies of the Briansk regiment under the orders of Lieutenant-colonel Lindstrom of the Orel regiment. The four other companies of the last-named regiment, forming the general reserve, were stationed between the Round and the Green batteries.

The object of the Turks upon the right flank was Mount Berdek, and they struggled for it with desperate persistence. About five o'clock in the morning Lieutenant-colonel Schwabe, who commanded this post, saw four Turkish columns advancing towards his position. He asked for reinforcements, and received a

company and a half. At six the Turks attacked furiously, and Colonel Schwabe, who had every man engaged, a second time asked for aid. Colonel Lipinsky sent him two companies of the Orel regiment. At half past seven the Turks, who had received some fresh troops, made a new assault; and the Russians sustained enormous losses. "The Turks fired at random," said one of them, "and only stray balls reached us; but there was such a hail of shot, so many stray bullets, that the ranks thinned with frightful rapidity." Lieutenant-colonel Schwabe begged a third time for reinforcements, and again a detachment of the reserve was sent him. General Stoletoff also ordered a half company of the 6th company of the Briansk regiment, and another from the 2nd *tirailleur* company of the Orel regiment, to occupy the "Turkish" lunette with four guns, in order to support the garrison of Berdek, and to take in flank the columns attacking that position.

In the meantime "the claws of the crab" were closing. Suddenly the column which had defiled upon the left flank of Mount Berdek debouched from the woods behind the Round battery, and threw themselves upon the road in order to take Mount Berdek in the rear. If this unexpected movement had succeeded, the Shipka position would have been completely invested, and the Russians lost. The 5th company and the half of the 6th company of the Briansk regiment, which were in reserve at the Round battery, had scarcely time to deploy, when they were assailed by a heavy fire at a distance of only a hundred paces; this little force then threw themselves upon the Turks with the bayonet without firing a shot, and drove them back at the first rush. A lively musketry fire immediately began, and although the assailants, reinforced by fresh troops, made several fresh advances, they were each time repulsed by the Russian fire.

Mount Berdek continued to absorb the successive detachments sent there; the Turkish bullets left not a single defender untouched. At ten o'clock Lieutenant-colonel Schwabe made a fresh demand for reinforcements, and the last available company was sent him, with the order to hold out to the last man. News had been received that General Radetzky had started from Gabrova with a brigade, and the brave General Stoletoff was determined to strain every effort in order to give him time to arrive. For four hours longer the battle raged

with incredible fury; it seemed as if the woods which environ the Pass almost vomited forth Turks by thousands; fresh masses constantly appeared, but still the Russians held on with heroic tenacity, and lost not an inch of ground.

The narratives of this day abound in admirable touches and heroic episodes. Many of the companies were left without a single officer, and none the less went on fighting heroically, and repelling the attacks of the enemy without any other guidance than that supplied by their own dauntless courage. Many of the wounded returned to the ranks after a first dressing, and when their officers tried to induce them to go to the hospital at Gabrova, they generally replied:—"We shall have plenty of time for that; the hospitals are meant for those who are seriously wounded; we are only slightly hurt, and can use our rifles as well as ever. . . . Every possible effort must be made; this is not the time for nursing oneself. . . . We can only die once!"—and they died like heroes.

Officers and soldiers rivalled each other in valour, and showed that they knew how to die without a murmur. Starving, worn out with fatigue, half of them ill, they only asked to fight on, and, as ever, the officers were in front. In many cases the soldiers whose rifles had been rendered useless kept their places in the ranks. "Why do you stay here?" said their officers, "you cannot fire." "True, sir," they replied, "but we have formed a special company for working with the bayonet." General Derojinsky, in making his round, perceived seventeen soldiers lying down behind one of the intrenchments, and an officer standing up, but with his face and leg bleeding, who saluted him. "What are your men doing there? are they asleep?" asked the General, pointing to them. "Yes, your Excellency; they sleep, but they will never wake again; they are dead." "And you, what are you doing here?" "I am waiting my turn; they were my company," replied the officer in a low voice.

At two in the afternoon an officer sent by Lieutenant-colonel Schwabe came to announce that, in view of the large number of wounded, and the constantly increasing forces of the Turks, it would be impossible for the detachment on Mount Berdek to maintain its position any longer without fresh and large reinforcements. But

only a few men were left in reserve with the standards, and orders were sent to the detachment to hold the position at any cost, and in case of extreme necessity, to fall back, taking care to avoid the fougasses laid behind the Berdek, and occupy some trenches in the rear; at the same time Lieutenant Romanof of the 7th battalion of engineers was instructed to keep the galvanic battery ready, in order to blow up the Turks if it became necessary to abandon the position.

This was one of the most critical moments of the day. The terrible musketry fire was still crackling against the Round battery; some Circasians were assaulting the Turkish lunette; and the battery on Berdek was on the point of being abandoned. There were no more reserves; every man had been sent into action, and was still engaged. Fortunately, however, the attack on the south front had considerably slackened, and Count Tolstoi was able to send a company to Colonel Lipinsky.

Between three and four o'clock, seeing that the enemy was directing his main efforts against the detachment on the right flank, he sent another company and draughted off his last reserve, consisting of two companies of the 1st and one of the 4th Battalion of the Bulgarian Legion to defend the base of the Pass near the "Turkish" lunette. About five, Colonel Tolstoi went in person to Colonel Lipinsky, on the right flank, confiding his command temporarily to Major Redkine, commander of the 4th Bulgarian battalion.

In spite of this help the situation on the right still remained very critical. The Turks, confined to the woods by the Russian volleys, lined the outskirts, and maintained an incessant fire, and numbers of wounded kept descending from Mount Berdek towards the place where the first dressings were applied. The handful of men left on the mountain, who since dawn had fought against an enemy incomparably superior in numbers, began at five in the afternoon to fall back in squads, carrying with them those last wounded. The officers of the detachment were almost all killed or wounded; and the companies were reduced to little mixed groups. In the trenches and the reserve the losses were equally great, in consequence of the cross-fire to which the position had been exposed since twelve o'clock.

The day then seemed hopelessly lost for the Russians. The Bulgarian Legion had, as we have

said, three-fourths of its men *hors de combat*, the Briansk and Orel regiments were reduced to half their strength, and the survivors were disheartened by the frightful carnage; and worst of all, after three days' heavy firing the stores of ammunition were becoming exhausted, and whilst the Turks incessantly renewed their attacks, the Russians had to economize their powder and fire as little as possible. As to reinforcements, none had been received, and no one knew when they would arrive. The Turks were at last getting the upper hand, driving back their adversaries on all sides, and successively occupying more advantageous positions. Seeing the Russian fire slacken, they strengthened their attacks, and Sulciman believed success was in his grasp. At five o'clock the Russian stores contained only empty chests; there was nothing more to fire, and the bayonet was the only means left to them of ending the day victoriously. The batteries stopped firing, the soldiers sprang forward with the bayonet, and once again the Turks recoiled before their irresistible *élan*; but as the Russian batteries did not reopen fire after their retreat, they no doubt divined the cause of the silence, and thereupon delivered a new and furious assault. The Russian troops, worn out by three days' continual fighting, without food and without sleep, and in want of cartridges, could not sustain their attack, and with tears in their eyes began to fall back, abandoning the positions reddened with their blood. The ammunition failed in the "Turkish" lunette, as well as everywhere else, and there, too, the firing ceased. The Turks, emboldened by the silence, sprang to the assault with the greatest confidence. They were just reaching the summit when the Russians, rallying from their intrenchments, rained down upon them a hail of large stones, trunks of trees, and other missiles, which sent many of them rolling to the base of the slopes they had ascended. Some of the boldest, who had reached the plateau, were bayoneted through and through and hurled over the side of the mountain.

For a whole hour the Russians defended themselves in the manner above described; at one time, even stones failing them, they hurled upon the Turks broken muskets, clods of earth, and cartridge boxes filled with small pebbles. Nevertheless the Turks, urged on by their officers, who displayed the greatest bravery (one, although severely wounded, fastened himself to a root half-way up

to the plateau, and from there called on his men), were about to take possession of the work; but at that moment a loud hurrah announced the arrival of the advance-guard of the long-expected reinforcements.

The position of affairs at this time was thus graphically described by Mr. Archibald Forbes, the correspondent of the *Daily News* with the Russians:—

"The moment was dramatic with an intensity to which the tameness of civilian life can furnish no parallel. The two Russian generals (Stoletoff and Derojinsky), expecting momentarily to be encircled, had sent a last telegram to the Czar, telling what they expected, how they tried to prevent it, and how that, please God, driven into their positions and beset, they would hold these till reinforcements should arrive. At all events, they and their men would hold their ground to the last drop of their blood.

"It was six o'clock; there was a lull in the fighting, of which the Russians could take no advantage, since the reserves were all engaged. The grimed, sun-blistered men were beaten out with heat, fatigue, hunger, and thirst. There had been no cooking for three days, and there was no water within the Russian lines. The poor fellows lay panting on the bare ridge, reckless that it was swept by the Turkish rifle fire. Others doggedly fought on down among the rocks, forced to give ground, but doing so grimly and sourly. The cliffs and valleys sent back the triumphant Turkish shouts of 'Allah il Allah!'

"The two Russian generals were on the peak which the first position half inclosed. The glasses anxiously scanned the visible glimpses of the steep brown road leading up there from the Jantra valley through thick copses of sombre green, and yet more sombre dark rock. Stoletoff cries aloud in sudden access of excitement, clutches his brother general by the arm, and points down the Pass. The head of a long black column was plainly visible against the reddish-brown bed of the road. "Now God be thanked!" says Stoletoff, solemnly. Both generals bare their heads. The troops spring to their feet. They descri the long black serpent coiling up the brown road. Through the green copses a glint of sunshine flashes, banishes the sombreness, and dances on the glittering bayonets. Such a gust of Russian cheers whirls and eddies among the mountain tops, that the Turkish war-

cries are wholly drowned in the glad welcome which the Russian soldiers send to the comrades coming to help them.

"Some time elapses. The head of the column draws near the Karaula, and is on the little plateau in front of the khan. But they are mounted men. The horses are easily discernible. Has Radetzky, then, been so left to himself, or so hard pushed, that he has sent cavalry to cope with infantry among the precipices of the Balkans? Be they what they may, they carry a tongue that can speak, for on the projection to the right of the khan a mountain battery has just come into action against the Turkish artillery on the wooded ridge, by the occupation of which the Turks are flanking the right of the Russian position. There are no riders on the horses now, and they are on their way down hill. But a column of Russian infantry are on the swift tramp up hill, till they get within firing distance of the Turks on the right, and then they break, scatter, and from behind every stone and bush spurt white jets of smoke.

"It is a battalion of the Rifle Brigade—the brigade itself is not two miles behind—and it is a rifle brigade that needs no more fighting in the Balkans to link its name with the great mountain chain. It is the same rifle brigade which followed General Gourko in his victorious advance and chequered retreat. The brigade has marched thirty-three miles straight on end without cooking or sleeping, and now is in action without so much as a breathing halt. Such is the stuff of which thorough good soldiers are made. Their general, the gallant Tzvitinsky, accompanies them, and pushes an attack on the enemy's position on that wooded ridge on the Russian right. But Radetzky, who himself brought up the tirailleurs, and so at the least reckoning saved the day, marches on up the road with his staff at his back, runs the triple gauntlet of the Turkish rifle fire, and joins the other two generals on the peak hard by the batteries of the first position."

To explain the opportune arrival of General Radetzky, it will be necessary to go back a little; for, as has already been narrated, the General had been lured to Elena by the feint attack of Sulciman Pasha on the Russian left. He arrived there on the 19th of August. On the 20th he received a despatch from General Stoletoff announcing that he was about to be attacked by the whole Turkish army; and discovering the ruse by which he had

been drawn away from the field of action, he at once set out for Tirnova, where he arrived on the 21st of August. There a fresh despatch reached him, informing him that the attack had already begun. His troops were fatigued with three days' useless marching, but there was no time for rest or refreshment. At daybreak on the 22nd he despatched towards Gabrova the 4th brigade of tirailleurs with two mountain guns. In addition he ordered the 2nd Infantry Division, which had just reached Muradly, to march upon Selvi, and on arriving there to send off immediately the first brigade of the 14th Division, with the 4th battery of the 14th artillery brigade to Gabrova.

General Radetzky himself went forward with the tirailleurs, who, notwithstanding their fatigue and the difficulties of the way, marched with the greatest speed and determination. Towards the latter part of the following day (the 23rd) they had arrived at the entrance of the Pass, where General Radetzky was met by an orderly officer descending the hill at full speed, his horse white with foam. "Quick, General," he cried on seeing General Radetzky; "we can hold out no longer, the Turks are on the point of cutting the road." The General immediately made his advance-guard take off their knapsacks, and mount the horses belonging to several sotnias of Cossacks encamped at that spot, the men belonging to which were already in the Pass; the Cossacks who had been left in charge of the horses acted as guides. The advance-guard went galloping up the hill, the men pricking the horses with their bayonets to make them go still faster. As they went on, parties of wounded were more and more frequently encountered, making their way down to Gabrova. In the distance resounded a heavy cannonade; its roar echoed and re-echoed among the hills. In the brief intervals when the artillery was silent, the crackling of a furious musketry fire was heard; and vast clouds of smoke could be seen at the top of the mountains.

The horses bounded forward as if inspired with the same ardour as the men. At length the field of battle was reached. The chasseurs were under 300, but they were worth an army. The moral effect produced by their arrival was immense. The defenders of Shipka used prodigally the few last cartridges they had been hoarding so carefully until then; while the Turks, believing that large reinforcements had arrived, felt that victory

was slipping from their grasp, and became disheartened.

General Radetzky had led the chasseurs in person, and may be said to have saved the day. Being senior and superior in rank, he immediately took the command and relieved General Stoletoff, after congratulating him upon his skillful dispositions and the vigour of his defence.

On the left the garrison had succeeded in repulsing the attacks of Suleiman's army, but upon the right the situation was seriously compromised. Masses of Turks remained concentrated upon a height opposite to and less than 900 yards from Mount Berdek—separated from it by a deep and difficult ravine, and from that point constantly threatened the rear of the Russian position.

Here a blow was still necessary to complete the deliverance of the Pass. General Radetzky, immediately grasping the situation, directed against this mountain the three companies of the 16th battalion of chasseurs, who had just arrived. The fire from the trenches was kept up about half an hour longer, until the moment when these companies reached the mountain and threw themselves upon the enemy's flank. Disordered by this intrepid charge, the Turks rapidly gave way. Then it became impossible to restrain the general enthusiasm of the troops; the men in the trenches sprang up and dashed forward with loud hurrahs, and compelled the Turks to retreat to a neighbouring height. About eight o'clock in the evening all was still; and for the first time in three days the cannonade and musketry fire completely ceased.

This sanguinary struggle had been most disastrous for Suleiman Pasha's army, for he had lost at least 8000 men in the course of it; the slopes of the Berdek were also covered with corpses. On the side of the Russians more than 2000 men had been rendered *hors de combat*—that is to say, nearly half their effective force. Of all the troops sent successively to the defence of the Berdek, only 150 men remained unwounded. It is impossible to conceive a contest carried on with more fury. The soldiers of both armies displayed equal valour; and the unrivalled tenacity of the Russian defence was only equalled by the incredible perseverance of the Turks in the attack.

The arrival of Radetzky with reinforcements saved the situation for the moment, and drove

back the Turks, who were on the point of seizing the Pass; but the Russian position was still most critical. The Turks had not only turned both the Russian flanks by seizing Berdek on the left and the mountains on the right, but they constructed a redoubt and planted a battery on the right, which commanded the road leading up to the Pass. This gave them possession of the ridge running parallel to that upon which the road was made, and which was about 1500 yards distant. The redoubt enfiladed the road in several places, and the Turkish infantry, by extending along the ridge, which was thickly wooded, sought to render the road impassable. It would have greatly aided the Russian defence had these flanking positions been occupied by them at the commencement, and the Russian commander would undoubtedly have done so had he had sufficient men; but he had altogether only a little over 3000, and the remains of the Bulgarian Legion—barely enough to defend the direct approaches to the Pass. Had the Turks possessed any of the modern appliances of war, such as field-telegraphy, systematic signalling, or electric lights for night work, the Russians could not have retained their positions for twenty-four hours. As matters were, although the arrival of the reinforcements on the 23rd of August enabled the Russians to hold their fortifications and prevented an attack from the rear, the road by which all supplies had to be brought, and through which all reinforcements had to pass, was in several places exposed to the Turkish fire. The spur occupied by the Turks was thickly wooded, and concealed by these woods detachments of marksmen were detailed to sweep the Russian road at the exposed points of its course, and to fire at everything exposed on the Russian ridge. Thus the passage of stores and ammunition became exceedingly difficult for the Russians, their men being picked off by the Turkish skirmishers wherever the road was exposed, and even on the further side of the ridge men were killed and wounded by the bullets dropping over from random firing. So critical did the position appear to the Russian commander, General Radetzky, that he sent to inform the Commandant of Gabrova the day after his arrival that he had better warn the inhabitants to be ready to fly at a moment's notice.

The Russians, however, continued to provide for the vigorous defence of their positions. A

brigade of chasseurs arrived at the Shipka Pass during the night of the 23rd, and early on the morning of the 24th the revictualling of the place commenced, and large supplies of ammunition were pushed forward without intermission. From Tirnova to Gabrova the country presented the appearance of a military camp, and the road was encumbered with an unbroken procession of families flying from Kazanlik and the villages on the south of the Balkans, where, as we have described in a previous chapter, massacres had recommenced. The Bulgarians of Gabrova, aided by some of these refugees, bravely rendered most valuable service to the Russian soldiers. They drove the wagons and worked at the repair of the road, braving the bullets and cannon balls, which made many victims among them.

At daybreak on the morning of August 24 the fighting was renewed, the Russians endeavouring to drive the Turks out of the woods and from the height on their right flank, while the Turks again attacked the Russian positions in the front and flanks, and strove to complete their turning movement. The fighting throughout the day was terribly severe, both sides displaying the greatest courage and tenacity. The Turks were very strong in their wooded position, and the battle waged to and fro—now the Russians, now the Turks gaining ground.

About mid-day Suleiman Pasha took the offensive against Mount St. Nicholas, but with insufficient forces, and without properly supporting the assault. The rocks of the Steel battery were his point of attack. Count Tolstoi immediately sent the 4th company of the Briansk regiment into the trenches along the route, and the 4th company of the Orel regiment, supported by two other companies, upon the rocks. An entire Turkish battalion, with two others as supports, rushed forward to the assault of the rocks, and in spite of a violent fire succeeded in reaching the summit, where it was warmly assailed with the bayonet, and the remnant of the half-destroyed battalion retired under a heavy fire; at the same moment the 13th battalion of chasseurs attacked the intrenchments on the Turkish right—which had considerably annoyed the Russian left—and briskly expelled the enemy.

The main interest of the day, however, centred on the right. There the Turks occupied the three heights of Aikiridjebel, and vigorously attacked the

Russian flank. One of these heights, situated opposite the Berdek, perpetually menaced the communications with Gabrova, and a detachment, consisting of the 16th battalion of chasseurs, the 11th company of the Briansk regiment, and two companies of the 14th battalion of chasseurs, charged with dislodging the Turks, commenced the attack upon the woods surrounding the position.

During the morning the Russian General Dragomiroff arrived with the Jitomir and Podolsk regiments of the 2nd brigade of his own Division, which had been marching two whole days, taking just time to eat, and scarcely any to sleep. The General left a detachment in reserve near the *khan*, and advanced towards the Turkish lunette. This part of the road was swept by the Turkish fire, and the Russians sustained some serious losses. Even when the undaunted troops had reached the peak, they found no sufficient shelter, for the Turkish rifle fire was coming from two quarters simultaneously. The men were therefore obliged to lie down in the trenches of the lunette, and wait until they were wanted. The arrival of these additional troops enabled the Russians to frustrate the efforts of the Turks to work round to their rear; but the heights were still stubbornly held by the Turkish infantry, and against these positions the Russians advanced.

General Radetzky was upon the slope of the hill with his Staff, watching the progress of the fight. Dragomiroff joined him, and the two generals remained there concerting their plans. As the Turks seemed in force, and held their own against the detachment attacking them, the 2nd Jitomir battalion was sent into action. It was noticed that General Dragomiroff, contrary to his wont, was anxious and pre-occupied, and seemed to have a presentiment of what was about to happen. As he descended from his horse on returning from an examination of the position, some one proposed that he should take a little rest, and seat himself on a folding chair. At the same moment the General sunk down, as if he had taken the offered seat. No one noticed the groan of pain from Captain Maltsof, who had fallen by the General's side. "It appears that I am wounded," said the latter. A bullet had in fact traversed his leg above the knee, tearing up the muscles, but without reaching the artery. This same ball had struck Captain Maltsof who was standing by.

The commotion which his wound caused among

those around the General was very great. He was famous for his intrepidity and the influence which he possessed over his men, and in the critical situation in which the garrison of Shipka was placed it was a double loss. The Jitomir regiment defiled past to take up its position at the moment when the General was being placed upon a litter. "Go on, my brave fellows; don't flinch before the fire. Every one has his fate, and if one is killed, *ma foi*, it is no great matter."

The Jitomir battalion dashed into the woods at the *pas de charge*. The tirailleurs, a body of well-trained skirmishers, looked out dexterously for cover, and the Turks displayed fine skirmishing ability; but some of the Russian line troops, not being trained in seeking cover, suffered very heavily. In the thick forest of oak and beech trees there was a determined fight, the infantry being frequently within less than a hundred yards of each other. For more than an hour it was impossible to say how it would be decided. At one time the Russians would advance with great impetuosity, and the Turks would fall back. Then the Turks would rally and charge home—bayonets crossing, and the slaughter being terrific.

The Russians about this time derived some assistance from the Bulgarian peasant boys who had accompanied them, and who displayed great courage by going down into the actual battle, right into the first line, with stone pitchers full of water for the fighting men. This water was procured from a distance in the rear, along a bullet-swept road; for there was no supply in the position itself.

About mid-day the Turks began to give way; their artillery quitted the first height, and the puffs of white smoke which marked the line of battle above the brushwood were observed to recede. Then the Russians made a determined attempt to drive the Turks back from their position. All the troops available were advanced to the attack—the columns being led by the Commander-in-chief, General Radetzky. And although they met with a stubborn resistance, they succeeded in taking some of the nearest of the Turkish works, and thus relieving the pressure on their flanks and rear. The Turks vainly attempted to retake the position, and the day ended with a fruitless attack by the Podolsk regiment against the other Turkish positions on the Aikirdjebel. The principal redoubts, however, still remained in

the hands of the Turks, who during the night brought up two more guns and further strengthened their position. The Turkish loss at the end of the day was about 1200 killed and wounded, while the Russian loss was even greater, being estimated at 1500 men.

Towards the close of the evening of the 24th the Volemsky regiment, by a forced march from Tirnova, arrived at the scene of operations, and raised the effective force of the Shipka garrison to nearly 20,000 men. The remnant of the Bulgarian Legion, which had been under fire for five days, was then permitted to descend to Gabrova to recruit themselves after the fatigues and privations they had endured.

The most pressing part of the work was now done: the position was saved; but the Pass was far from being cleared. During the five days' struggle which had just terminated, the garrison had been too much occupied in defending its own positions, and too weak numerically, to dream of hindering the movements of the enemy outside the immediate range of their fire. The Turks had availed themselves of the opportunity to outflank the Russian right, descend the Balkans on the Gabrova side, and to establish three rows of trenches supported by a battery upon the right of the route on a height, called in the Russian official reports *Mont Boisé* ("the wooded hill"), at the point where the road, leaving the valley of the Jantra, begins to ascend the defile. Imagine a deep ravine; the road forming a series of short zig-zags along the left side, and upon the right, about 1400 or 1500 yards off, the Turkish works, which enfiladed the road at several places, and consequently rendered it excessively dangerous. Such was the state of things which the Russians, in consequence of their numerical weakness, had been unable to prevent. So long as these works remained undestroyed, the re-entrenching of Shipka and the movements of the troops could only be performed by passing under the fire of the enemy, and risking sensible loss. This was very apparent on the morning of the 25th; the bullets pattered against the rocks among which the road was cut, and soldiers fell here and there among the convoys, often struck without any one hearing the distant report of the weapon which had sent the ball. General Derojinsky received a bullet right in the heart, and fell dead without a word.

General Radetzky had seen the necessity of

driving the Turks from *Mont Boisé* at all costs, and on the 24th made his dispositions for the struggle. The 3rd battalion of the Jitomir regiment was sent to turn the enemy's left; it went down almost to Gabrova, and then, ascending by a well-nigh impracticable acclivity, arrived near the Turkish intrenchments on the morning of the 25th. As has been already described, the two peaks occupied by the Russian and Turkish redoubts were thickly wooded, as well as the connecting ridge between. The action commenced by General Radetzky, who advanced his troops along this ridge under cover of the woods, and opened fire on the redoubt with two or three batteries. Soon a fierce musketry fire announced that the combatants had come in contact with each other, and that the attack had begun in earnest. For several hours the mountains echoed with the rattle of musketry and the thunder of cannon.

The Russians advanced in Indian file, sheltered by the trees, but not completely hidden, because their fire betrayed their presence. They soon reached to within fifty yards of the first work; but there they encountered obstacles which proved for the moment insurmountable. The Turks had made an abatis of trees all round the redoubt, which it was almost impossible to cross. The Russians massed themselves behind the trees, and made a sudden rush at the abatis, but were repulsed with enormous losses; the men were struggling among the branches while the Turks, firing point blank, mowed them down like grass. Very few returned from this first assault upon the redoubt; and one company was entirely destroyed.

As soon as he heard the fusillade of the Jitomir battalion, Radetzky ordered Colonel Lipinsky to attack the work with the troops of the advanced guard on the flank, reinforced by a battalion of the Podolsk and three companies of the Briansk regiment. Colonel Lipinsky gave his troops the following orders for the attack:—Two companies of the 14th battalion were to advance straight up the road, stopping at the abatis to fire volleys, in order to draw off the Turkish fire from the columns who had attacked on the right and left; a battalion of the Jitomir regiment was ordered to advance upon the right, and the battalion of the Podolsk regiment upon the left of the chasseurs. These battalions threw out a thick fringe of

skirmishers, behind which they marched, with two companies in the first line, and the other companies in the second, two by two. The tirailleurs had orders to advance without firing. The Commander-in-chief mounted his horse and proceeded to the scene of action, accompanied by some of his Staff.

In an hour the troops had reached the foot of Mont Boisé, and stopped there, as previously arranged, to rest. The cordons of skirmishers were already scrambling up the mountain side. After a few moments' breathing space the columns commenced to attack simultaneously. The brigade of Veissel Pasha, which held the position, at first directed all its attention upon the column which advanced along the road; but on seeing the skirmishers advancing on the right and left, the Turks deployed and directed their fire upon both sides, slightly weakening that of their centre against the road. The centre Russian column then dashed at racing speed right up to the works. When the Turks saw the small number of assailants in the first line they rushed forward; but being vigorously charged with the bayonet in front by the centre column, and on right and left by the two battalions of the Jitomir and Podolsk regiments, they took to flight, leaving a great many dead on the field. The *elan* of the Russians was so impetuous that the Turkish reserves never dreamt even of defending the second work situated behind the first, but retired precipitately, discharging their pieces at random.

Carried away by success, the Russians, instead of stopping to reform their ranks, rushed on in pursuit of the enemy, and arrived in disorder at the triple line of trenches established by the Turks upon Mont Boisé. There they found themselves in presence of fresh troops; and compelled to stop, they opened a lively fusillade.

Not having sufficient men to continue the forward movement and take the last height, General Radetzky sent the 2nd battalion of the Volhynia regiment as reinforcement to the combatants, and at the same time ordered Colonel Lipinsky to lead back his troops a little. The 3rd battalion of the Volhynia regiment, under the orders of Colonel Count Adlerberg, was sent to occupy the first work taken from the Turks, and the rest of the troops received orders to remain in their positions.

The fighting continued throughout the whole of the day; and although there had been five days'

almost continuous battle, it was also maintained throughout the night. The moon had risen in great splendour, and the hills were plainly discernible in the soft light; and about nine o'clock the conflict, that had slackened for awhile, was renewed by an attack on the front of the Turkish left, the Russian columns advancing over the saddle that connected the Russian centre battery and the Turkish left. For many hours the fighting was of the severest character. The battle raged the whole night, and there was hardly ten minutes' lull in the roll of the musketry. The Russians managed to reach the edge of the Turkish redoubt, but were unable to take it. The 3rd battalion of the Volhynia regiment, reinforced by two companies of the Briansk regiment, succeeded in repelling the Turkish attacks all night; but the colonel, Count Adlerberg, despaired of being able to hold Mont Boisé much longer with the forces at his disposal, and asked for reinforcements.

General Radetzky found it impossible to strengthen the flank detachment, for he had only the Minsk regiment left in reserve, and it was necessary to replace, by fresh troops, several of the detachments engaged—who for days had been without warm food, and almost without water. He then ordered Count Adlerberg to retreat, which he did on the morning of the 26th, after having repulsed two more Turkish assaults. The Turks, who had sustained enormous losses, did not pursue, but contented themselves with retaking possession of all the works on Mont Boisé.

An eye-witness, speaking of this battle, says:—"It was a rare sight, this great battle in those dark woods at night. The flashes of fire passed along the line like an electric spark, and a strange effect was produced by the red light reflected on the columns of smoke that hung suspended over the combatants in the still night air. The whole of the top of the mountain seemed ablaze for hours with musketry and cannon discharges, and at certain moments the whole summit appeared to be on fire."

Next morning the sight from the assaulted trenches was ghastly indeed. Several hundred dead Russians were counted on the hill side where the severest struggle occurred, and several of the uppermost were officers. A kind of unofficial truce was agreed upon on the 26th, in order to bury the dead. The morning following 800 wounded were sent down from the Turkish position, but there

was not a single Russian prisoner made nor any Russian wounded man brought into Turkish lines; no quarter had been given by the Turks, and no prisoners were taken on either side.

On the night of the 26th the Russians renewed the attack, but not in great force, and no change was made in the positions on either side. In fact, the troops in both armies were now thoroughly exhausted, and the demand for rest became so imperative that, on the 27th and 28th of August, the fighting was confined to the artillery, which kept up a desultory cannonade.

In this terrible six days' battle the greatest courage was displayed both by the Russian and Turkish troops, and the losses were exceedingly heavy. No less than ten distinct attacks were made by the Turks in the conflict on the first day, and at the close of the battle on the 26th the Russians calculated that upwards of 100 distinct attacks had been made and repulsed.

The losses of the Russians, according to their official reports, were much less than would have been supposed from the desperate nature of the combat; and in order to accept the correctness of the numbers given, it must be borne in mind with what a small force they sustained Suleiman Pasha's attack! The number of wounded was returned as 98 officers and 2633 non-commissioned officers and men, and there were about 1000 dead. The loss in officers was enormous; it was experienced chiefly during the 23rd, 24th, and 25th. The Turkish sharpshooters, who were very skillful, commanded the Russian lines, and were able to pick out the officers from the ranks, owing to their being so conspicuous from the white colour of their uniforms. The brigade of chasseurs thus lost twenty-four, the 2nd and 3rd battalions of the Jitomir regiment nearly all, the Volhynia regiment eleven, the Podolsk seven, and the Briansk every one of the superior officers.

With regard to the losses sustained by the Turks, the exact number will probably never be known. During the first days of the attack they were compelled to advance against the most difficult positions—in many places so steep that the men had to crawl on their hands and knees, and cling to the brushwood to ascend; and wherever the ground afforded a landing place there they were subjected to the fire of artillery, and the yet more deadly breechloader, from an enemy almost invisible, and well covered by intrench-

ments. In consequence of this the Turkish loss was very much greater than the Russian. There was no official account published on the Turkish side, but it is certain that there were between 4000 and 5000 wounded at one time in Kazanlik, on or about the 29th or 30th of August. At the same time there were 2000 wounded at Philippopolis, and 1350 had passed through Adrianople. This makes a total of 8350 wounded alone, while the number killed, taken at the lowest estimate, cannot be reckoned at less than 4000 more, making a total loss to the army of Suleiman Pasha of upwards of 12,000 men. Some estimates, indeed, made the number 20,000! But accepting only the smaller number, it was a fearful waste of life without having effected any result.

It is worthy of note that a great difference was displayed between the two armies in the treatment of the wounded. An English correspondent with the Russians said—"During the fighting I spent some time with the surgeons working in the most advanced positions, and should like to bear testimony to their admirable devotion to duty and their skilled dexterity. They pursued their duties with a noble courage and disregard of risk. Their kind attention to the wounded, and their attention to trifles—such as supplying water, lavage burning faces, and administering restoratives—filled me with admiration."

Writing at the same time and quite independently, another English correspondent with the Turks, after commending the Turks for their splendid courage and devotion, said—"I cannot close my letter without remarking on the inhuman indifference the Turks show to their wounded. The unfortunate Turkish soldier must take care of himself in about eight cases out of ten. If he can hobble away to some place of shelter, he may; but as to any organization, ambulance transport, medical comforts, or what not, he must not expect any. What is he that anybody should care about him? Let him go to the English ambulance, and have chloroform when his poor battered limbs are amputated, or beef-tea when he is so feeble he can swallow nothing else; but he must not expect his own countrymen to care about him in this kind of way, or, indeed, to care much what becomes of him." Another correspondent with the Turks, in reference to these same engagements, says—"The medical and sanitary arrangements of this army are beneath all criticism. I

shall not say anything else of the Turkish doctors than that the wounded all ask to be dressed by the English *hakims*."

On the Russian side, the members of the medical service had as much as they could do. "During the struggle," wrote General Kossinsky to a Russian journal, "the doctors were admirable—full of courage and devotion; it would be impossible to require greater fidelity and self-abnegation in the accomplishment of duty. They had two places for dressing wounds on the very field of battle, also an ambulance in the rear of our positions, and a hospital at Gabrova. The first of the two points at which the wounds were dressed was established on the side of Mount St. Nicholas in the middle of the trenches. It was all the time exposed to the cross fire of the enemy, who were posted on the height which commanded the road, so that the wounded could only be removed during the night. They were attended to under an incessant fire from the Turks. On the 21st of August Dr. Cugrioumof, who was attached to one of the Bulgarian legions, was wounded. During the night of the 23rd, the enemy having gained ground, the places where the surgeons had been became exposed to a most violent fire, so that it was necessary to move farther back. Nevertheless the position on Mount St. Nicholas was maintained, although it could only be reached under cover of night, and even then the men who were sent were often killed or wounded. In spite of the difficulties of the ground, the service for the transport of our wounded worked admirably. The men of the ambulance corps of the 9th and 14th Divisions went to pick them up, under a murderous fire, with a devotion which could not be too much admired, and conducted them from the points more particularly exposed. Many of these devoted men sacrificed their lives to their faithfulness to duty. Some assistant-surgeons also fell while attending to the needs of the wounded."

A correspondent wrote from Adrianople on the 5th of September to the *Correspondance Politique* of Vienna—"An enormous number of wounded arrive here every day, coming from Philippopolis. I have succeeded in ascertaining that in four days 6000 wounded have arrived—the greater part of whom have been sent on to Constantinople, in order to make room for others. But it is a fact that there are still from 4000 to 5000 wounded at Philippopolis. If we count the 5000 wounded

which are at Kazanlik, we arrive at the enormous number of 16,000 wounded." There were so many that Dr. Moore, who had been sent out by the Stafford House Committee, said that Suleiman Pasha told him that, had it not been for the help of the doctors from Stafford House, he would have been obliged to have had his wounded shot! The English doctors were unfortunately altogether insufficient in number, and whoever was seriously wounded in the Turkish army was given up to an almost certain death. An Austrian doctor in the service of the Ottoman army wrote to the *Presse de Vienne*, that the Turkish military doctors were recruited from the most dissimilar elements. "You would find amongst them men who had never handled any other instrument than their knives for cutting up sheep. It is impossible to estimate the numbers of the victims of ignorance and of the want of sanitary measures, but the non-observance of the most simple and primitive hygienic rules causes the Turks to succumb by thousands to dysentery, typhus, and fever. The losses of the Turks on the fields of battle are still more considerable, on account of the absolute imperfection of the sanitary service. The Turks have no litters for carrying the wounded; they have no ambulance-men to cheer them up; they have no place devoted to the dressing of wounds; they have no means of effecting the transport of the sick and wounded to places where they can be better cared for. The wounded Turk is scarcely ever willing to allow himself to be amputated. He would be afraid of being obliged to live in Paradise lamed. Moreover, the doctors have neither material nor instruments sufficient to make surgical operations, and what little they have is their own property. I am not afraid of exaggerating in estimating that from 80 to 90 per cent. of wounded Turks succumb to their wounds. Under such circumstances it is only possible to explain their bravery and *sang-froid* on the field of battle by remembering the intensity of Oriental fanaticism, and the promised delights of Paradise."

At the end of the fighting, Suleiman Pasha asked that 20,000 men should be immediately sent to reinforce him. Some battalions from Asia formed the greater part of them; to complete the total, the Turkish Government obtained from the police, and from the military authorities of the Stamboul garrison, all the men who could possibly be spared, and with these recruits four battalions

were formed. For the first time black eunuchs even, those fierce guardians of the harems, were enrolled, and all the rich men were obliged to give up some of them to the army. The Sultan alone retained all his.

On the 29th of August the Russian positions were visited by General Nepokoitchitzki, chief of the general Staff, who, finding they were held in sufficient strength, sent back the reinforcements which were on their way to the Pass, leaving General Radetzky with all the 14th Division, a brigade of the 9th Division, the tirailleurs, the Bulgarians, and a detachment of foot Cossacks with additional artillery, to hold the Pass against all comers.

For some time after the 28th the Turks made no further attack—being engaged in reorganizing their shattered forces, fortifying their positions, establishing batteries, and digging trenches. The Russians, however, contented themselves with holding their fortified positions, and made no attempt to advance beyond them. A desultory fire was kept up between the outposts, and the Turkish artillery occasionally shelled those portions of the road that were exposed to the fire of their redoubt. To minimize the effect of this the Russians brought up their ammunition and supplies chiefly by night, until byways were made round the exposed portions of the road, out of reach of the Turkish fire. The Russian official despatches at this time stated:—

"From the 26th August to the 13th September the enemy have limited themselves to directing artillery and infantry fire upon our positions and the GABROVA road; and this, though feeble up to the 9th, has since been redoubled. Our artillery has replied to that of the enemy; but we have not answered the infantry fire, since the Turks were completely sheltered by a wood, and were at a great distance. It has only been possible to replenish ammunition and provisions by night. During the night also we executed engineering works to repair the damage done to the trenches and batteries by the enemy's fire during the day. Each day we have made 210 gabions, by employing upon them all the men at liberty; and have formed hollow roads, under the direction of Lieutenant-colonel Rezy, who arrived on the 1st September with two companies of the 2nd battalion of engineers. In addition to this, a company of the 5th battalion of engineers under

Colonel Svistchevsky has been engaged in forming trenches in the Pass of Triavna and on the Berdek, and in constructing works and batteries at Gabrova. Thanks to the efforts of the engineers and to the co-operation of the person in authority in the district, the position at Shipka has been rendered stronger from day to day, and our troops have been, as much as possible, placed in shelter from the fire of the enemy. On an average our losses have been, from 27th August to 13th September, from five to ten men a day. During this period the Turks have attempted nothing serious, and we have only had two skirmishes with the enemy."

During the first week in September it was believed in the Russian camp that Suleiman Pasha had given up the attempt to force his way through the Shipka Pass, and that he would endeavour to cross the Balkans at other points. Though the heights in the Pass which had been captured by his troops were still occupied by some Turkish detachments, the bulk of his army was withdrawn to the village of Shipka and to Kazanlik. In view of this change in the situation, General Radetzky decided to send back more than half of his troops to the north, so as to protect his communications with Tirnova against an attack of Suleiman's troops from Elena or the Trajan Pass. By the 10th of the month the Russian garrison in the Pass was reduced to one-half of its former strength.

The most serious inconvenience to the Russians was the position on Mont Boisé, which was a perpetual threat to their rear; but after the losses experienced in the attack on the 25th, this danger was preferred rather than the risk of exposing themselves to a fresh defeat.

Suleiman Pasha, however, had not retired; he had, as we know, been engaged in reorganizing his army, and had received reinforcements both of men and artillery. The Russian redoubt and works on Mount St. Nicholas being almost out of the effective range of field artillery, Suleiman Pasha determined to assail them by mortar fire. On the 11th of September it became evident to the Russians in the Pass, that Suleiman was about to make another attack upon it. The Russian officers, through their telescopes, saw the Turks streaming by thousands into their positions, and dragging up with them huge guns and mortars. Some of these guns were so heavy that from 500 to 800 men were engaged in taking up a single gun. Half of the guns were directed against Mount St. Nicholas, and

the other half on the road through which any troops coming from the north to the fort must pass. The cannonade began on the 12th, and for four days the Russian forts were shelled by the mortars placed out of sight of their position—sheer behind the ridge of the Turkish heights. These mortars were most admirably laid; and though the shells described a very severe parabola, they fell with wonderful accuracy. Being planted out of sight, it was impossible for the Russian artillery to reply effectively; and after the first day the Russian gunners withdrew from their guns, and gave up all attempt to answer this terrible fire, which was continued without intermission by night as well as by day. The Russian troops were withdrawn from the positions exposed to the falling bombs, but were kept in readiness to repel any advance; while, under cover of the fire, the Turks availed themselves of the opportunity to cut rifle pits all along the slopes of their own positions on either side of the Russian height. Notwithstanding these movements, the Russians did not anticipate a direct attack, but regarded them as being intended to distract their attention from Suleiman's operations elsewhere, and telegrams were sent to the commandants at Gabrova and Drenova warning them that an attack was imminent. In this supposition the Russians were mistaken. The victory at Plevna on September 12—described in the next chapter—naturally inspirited the Turkish Government, and gave them increased confidence in their armies.

In the council of war at Constantinople which assisted Mahmoud Damad, and was engaged in directing the distant military operations, it was believed that the moment had come to strike a decisive blow. The main portion of the Russian reinforcements were still some days from the theatre of war; the time therefore seemed extremely propitious for attempting a supreme effort to hurl the enemy back beyond the Danube, and the Seraskierate sent orders to Suleiman Pasha and Mehmed Ali to attack the Russian forces before them immediately. The former, who had the sanguinary failures of the month of August to atone for, very readily obeyed.

Having, as he expected, severely damaged the Russian works by his mortar fire, Suleiman Pasha again attempted to gain possession of the fortifications. This time, however, he determined to make the attack by night. By the 16th of

September his preparations were complete, and at about ten o'clock the troops began to march from their quarters. Even after the previous bombardment the attempt was still very hazardous. The sides of Mount St. Nicholas are extremely steep; on the south the mountain rises up perpendicularly to a height of at least 150 or 200 feet; towards the south-west and south-east its height is somewhat less; and to the north-west the rocky side slopes down gradually, although still retaining a steep incline; besides, this mountain, which was so well defended naturally, had become under the hands of the Russians a regular citadel, covered with batteries, epaulements, and trenches.

The following were Suleiman Pasha's dispositions for the attack. A corps of 3500 volunteers were first to attempt to surprise the Russian posts; this corps was composed chiefly of Nizams, with a few hundred Arabs, and about fifty irregulars, Bashi-bazouks and Circassians. All these men volunteered to march in advance, and each wore something white on the left arm, in order that they might be able to recognize each other in the darkness. They formed three columns, which at half past three in the morning of the 17th were to attempt to escalate Mount St. Nicholas on three sides at once, without allowing themselves to be seen. The first column was to direct itself towards the south-east, and endeavour to ascend the rock between the Russian battery and the south-eastern corner; the second column was to ascend at the south-west corner, and the third, further off on the south-west, was to attempt to reach the summit by means of a small break in the wall of rock. As soon as these three columns of the advance-guard should have gained the height, they were to be supported by a general attack on the Russian position. Redjib Pasha was directed to attack from the east and south-east; Salih Pasha from the south and south-west; and Veissel Pasha from the west and north-west. Each of these generals had six battalions under him. Four other battalions in the principal camp formed the reserve, and were to be used in case of need.

The night was favourable, and the assigned positions were taken without the Russians having the slightest intimation of anything unusual being about to occur. At eleven o'clock the volunteers left the principal camp, which was situated behind the great mounds between Shipka and Senovo. They then had a march of two hours before arriv-

ing at the Turkish positions in the mountain. At half-past three in the morning the assaulting columns again set out in the directions which had been previously arranged. The first column went from Redjib Pasha's camp; it had the shortest distance to go. The third column, which had the farthest distance to traverse, was commanded by Colonel Hamdy Bey. When they set out the moon had already set, and by the light of the stars the steep and triangular form of Mount St. Nicholas could scarcely be distinguished.

The first column had not gone half way, and had not even reached the foot of the rock, when the 2nd and 3rd companies of the Podolsk regiment, which were on guard on that side, perceived them, and opened a heavy fire. This storm of bullets did not disorder the assailants, who continued their march slowly, but without a stop. The rock soon became alive with vivid flashes of rifle firing, in the face of which the Turks scaled the rock in dense masses, hurling hand grenades amongst the Russian troops.

These Turkish soldiers were accustomed to mountain warfare, having engaged in it in Montenegro, Bosnia, and Servia; therefore they knew perfectly how to take advantage of the ground, and most of them could climb like cats. At first the Turks did not reply to the Russian fire, but kept springing from stone to stone, raising their guns above their heads, or crept between the rocks, and thus endeavoured to gain the summit. The Russians threw themselves upon them, and then followed one of those hand-to-hand combats so rare in contemporary warfare, and which are so murderous. The Turks availed themselves of the cracks in the rocks, while the Russians attacked them with the butt ends of their guns, their bayonets, or their swords. Many of the assailants fell from the top of the rocks, and were dashed to pieces below, but their comrades did not stop to watch them disappear.

The two Podolsk companies, having lost four officers and a large number of men, were obliged to fall back. Having been informed of the surprise by Colonel Doukhonine, who was commanding the defence of Mount St. Nicholas, Major-general Petroushevsky, commander of the 14th Division of infantry, who had replaced General Dragomiroff, ordered two companies of the Jitomir regiment, which for the night had been in reserve at the foot of Mount St. Nicholas, to ascend the mountain.

Colonel Doukhonine sent one of these companies to support the sharp-shooters of the Podolsk regiment. General Radetzky, who had remained at Shipka to direct the defence, having arrived at this moment in person at the scene of the combat, ordered Colonel Tiajelnikof, commander of the Jitomir regiment, to send to Mount St. Nicholas the eight other companies of the 2nd and 3rd battalions of that regiment.

But as the struggle became very hot, the General commanding, while awaiting the arrival of Tiajelnikof, sent immediately to the mountain two companies of the Volhynia regiment, which were in reserve near by. The whole fire of the garrison of Mount St. Nicholas and the reinforcements it had received was then directed against the first column of the enemy, and caused it to suffer enormous losses; but with remarkable obstinacy and bravery the Turks continued to ascend the mountain, occupied some of the rocks, and commenced forming intrenchments with the aid of some gabions and fascines which they had brought up. Two companies of the Podolsk regiment, supported by a company of the Jitomir regiment, endeavoured to dislodge them from the rocks. To reach them they had to advance along a narrow ridge between two precipices. They thus suffered enormously; and although very bravely led on, their attacks failed.

From their position the Turks, hidden under whatever cover there was be met with upon their side of the ravine, fired with the utmost energy across at the Russians, whilst, on the other hand, the men intrenched on the Russian side were picking off their exposed assailants most mercilessly. The Russian eastern battery also poured its shells in among the Turkish intrenchments; but those on the western side were unable to play with so great effect on account of the closeness of the combatants to each other. The eastern battery was vigorously replied to the whole time by the Turkish guns on the Shipka road, and these having fuse shells gave some compensation for the losses which the Turks sustained from the correctness of aim of the Russian artillerymen. The mortar batteries also fired heavily all the time the attack was being made.

Suddenly an ominous cry of "Allah il Allah" rang out from the south-west of Mount St. Nicholas, accompanied by a heavy musketry fire. The Russians, taken by surprise, turned against this fresh enemy, and so the first Turkish column,

re-forming itself, had time to take up a position on the south-eastern crest of the mountain.

The second column, which had to perform the almost impossible feat of ascending the rock on the south-west, had arrived upon the summit without being perceived by the Russians. The latter did not in the least expect an attack from this part, for the ascent of that side was looked upon as impossible. "On the following day," says a correspondent of the *Augsburg Gazette*, "I saw the men of this column; their clothes were in shreds; the buttons were either torn out or rubbed off; they all had their pantaloons in holes at the knee, and the bleeding sores which appeared beneath showed what unheard of efforts they had been obliged to make."

The sun had now arisen, and the Turkish commander observed that two of the columns had been thus far successful in their advance. The third column had not yet appeared; but it soon arrived, reaching the summit of Mount St. Nicholas about half an hour after the second, having suffered heavy losses. This column, which had the longest, but least fatiguing, march to make, had been perceived immediately, and were received with a murderous fire. The Russians threw themselves upon them three times from the top of the mountain; but the well-directed fire of the assailants forced them each time to retire to their positions. Hamdy Bey, the Turkish commander, fell, but his men reached the top.

Half an hour, therefore, after sunrise, the three assaulting columns were on the top of Mount St. Nicholas, and had planted there a standard with a red crescent on a white ground, this being the flag adopted by the Turkish Society for Relieving the Wounded. A telegraphic despatch was sent to the Turkish head-quarters, saying, "Shipka is ours!"

During the whole night Suleiman Pasha had been anxiously watching the progress of the volunteers upon the mountain, the cannonade and musketry fire upon which in the darkness resembled an immense pyrotechnical display; he went through the camp announcing the good news to all the officers, and immediately forwarded the information to Constantinople, from whence it was sent all over Europe.

As had been arranged, directly Mount St. Nicholas was seen to be in the power of the Volunteers, Salih and Veissel Pashas attacked the

Russian positions—the first on the south, and the second on the west. Salih Pasha, with his six battalions, advanced along the road and attacked the "Steel battery." One company of the Podolsk, two of the Jitomir, and one of the Volhynia regiments were immediately sent against him. These four companies, with their united efforts joined to the brilliant action of the artillery, succeeded in repulsing the Turks. The 1st battery of the 14th artillery brigade, the commander of which, Colonel Prince Mestchersky, was slain at the beginning of the combat, inflicted great losses upon them with grape-shot. One of the officers, Lieutenant Sidorine, seeing it was impossible to fire upon the assailants from behind the parapet, under a shower of bullets placed the cannons in an exposed position, and with a few skilful discharges of grape-shot dispersed the Turkish assaulting columns, which, however, returned to the charge with splendid impetuosity and in good order. Lieutenant Sidorine then received two wounds, and was obliged to be carried back.

On the west Veissel Pasha silently formed his column under shelter of the wood, and at early dawn they advanced against the seven companies of the Volhynia regiment which were occupying the trenches on the Green Hill. As the Turks approached the Russian position, their advance was discovered by an outpost on the right wing, and Lieutenant-colonel Sandezky of the Volhynia regiment, who was in command at that spot, gave orders to the troops to hold themselves prepared, and to await the attack. Captain Ostanoff, commander of the 1st company of rifles, allowed the Turks to approach within fifty paces, and then poured a heavy volley against them, which caused them hastily to retreat.

A company of the Podolsk regiment and the 4th battery of the 14th artillery brigade then directed their fire upon Veissel's troops. Three times in succession the Turks returned to the charge, and each time they were repulsed by the cross fire from the infantry, and especially by the grape-shot from the 4th battery, commanded by Colonel Hoffman.

At eight o'clock in the morning the Turkish attacks had been repulsed at all points, except on Mount St. Nicholas, which they still held. Whilst this desperate fighting was going on at the south and west of Shipka, Redjib Pasha, who had been charged with attacking the south-eastern and

most accessible positions of the enemy, remained comparatively still.

During the night the artillery had done little; but as soon as the artillerymen could make out the enemy and take aim, the Russian batteries opened a frightful fire. The guns on the south-eastern face especially fired furiously without interruption, and, in the absence of Redjib Pasha, greatly contributed to repulsing the attack of Salih Pasha on the south. The Turkish volunteers, who from the top of Mount St. Nicholas saw the field of battle unroll itself like a panorama at their feet, understood the situation at a glance, and felt that success would be on their side if they could succeed in silencing these batteries, and so prepare for the attack of Redjib Pasha; but from the heights they occupied how were they to descend to the positions of the Russian batteries? They were not numerous enough for that. But they could shoot down the Russian artillerymen at their guns, and give Redjib Pasha's columns time to come up. The volunteers then fired with desperate zeal upon the artillerymen, and were so successful that at the end of an hour all the batteries, with the exception of one, had ceased firing. This was the critical moment. If Redjib Pasha arrived, success was certain. But Redjib did not come; and the volunteers finally discovered that the good Pasha was quietly remaining at his camp, that Veissel and Salih had been repulsed, and that no one was coming to support them.

"A brilliant debut," said the correspondent of the *Augsburg Gazette*, whom we have already quoted, "degenerated into a total defeat. Why? Because the Pashas are always men who would allow themselves to be slain by the side of their cup of coffee before quitting it, and because the subordinate officers are worthless. With Turkish soldiers one would be able to conquer the world, on condition that their officers should be dismissed. Among the 800 wounded treated here to-day, only one officer was found."

About nine o'clock in the morning the intrepid volunteers, to whom no one even thought of sending succour by the route they had themselves followed, were still obstinately resolved to hold the rock they had conquered, and made arrangements for resisting the whole Russian army, which was now entirely free as to its movements, since neither Veissel Pasha nor Salih Pasha were renew-

ing their attacks, and Redjib was, as we have seen, immovable. The companies who were operating against them had suffered cruelly, and had not sufficient forces to dislodge them. Colonel Doukhonine had in reserve only two companies of the Jitomir regiment, and did not dare to engage them before the arrival of reinforcements. General Radetzky then sent to Mount St. Nicholas Colonel Tiajelnikof, with a battalion of the Jitomir regiment. An assaulting column was then formed, composed of two companies of the Jitomir regiment, and one company of the Volhynia regiment; the attack, which was at first directed by Colonel Tiajelnikof, and then when that officer had been wounded, by Colonel Prince Khilkof, was admirably executed. The Turks, after a desperate resistance, were thrown back from the rock; a great number of them were slain on the spot, and many more were struck down while trying to escape; all the side of the mountain was strewn with bodies.

Suleiman Pasha's fresh attack had thus, like his preceding ones, miscarried. It must be said that this time the Turkish General did not show himself at his best. Instead of directing the assault himself, as he was in the habit of doing, it seemed that he left his Pashas to do almost as they pleased. The result was that the affair was very badly conducted, and that in spite of the brilliant bravery of the Turkish soldiers it failed. Although there were several battalions camped opposite Shipka, not one made the least effort to go to the assistance of the volunteers, who for six hours maintained themselves against greatly superior forces. Amongst these volunteers were some who would not yield at any price, and who kept up a continual fire upon the Russians. The latter were obliged to bring them down like sparrows from the points of rock on which they were perched, or to drive them back with the bayonet if they came too near.

By one o'clock in the afternoon all the ground upon which so much blood had been shed was again in the hands of the Russians. The volunteers had lost nearly a third of their men in dead and wounded, and the total Turkish loss amounted to more than 3000 men. On the Russian side considerable losses had been experienced, especially in the attempts they had made to retake Mount St. Nicholas. They had thirty-one officers and more than 1000 men *hors de combat*. Among the killed

was an aide-de-camp of the Emperor, Prince Mestchersky; and among the wounded, Colonel Rennerfeldt, of the general Staff.

The Turkish Government, which, upon the faith of the first information sent by Suleiman Pasha, had telegraphed the news of the capture of the Mount St. Nicholas to the whole of Europe, was obliged to acknowledge its defeat the next day.

Whether the attack, made in the manner that it was, ever had any fair chance of success is problematical, but certainly the plans of the Turkish commander were very inefficiently carried out. Very feeble flank attempts were made by the generals to whom the duty was assigned, and scarcely credible accounts were bruited about as to the inefficiency, and even absence altogether from the fight, of the officers with these troops. The reason given for their failure was that the points chosen for the right and left attack were found to be too strong; still, to capture the positions was one matter, while to make an important auxiliary movement, and to prevent the Russians sending reinforcements to the centre, was another and far easier one.

On the evening of the 17th a report was spread abroad in the Turkish camp that the Russians had received reinforcements, and were about in their turn to attack. The result of this was a panic on the next day. The Russians, in reality, did not attempt to drive the Turks from the positions they occupied around them; for the time all their efforts were limited to retaining possession of the Pass. The two adversaries, therefore, remained in sight of each other as before; the Turks besieging—very tamely, however—the defile, and the Russians content to remain on the defensive.

Throughout the whole of this tremendous fighting, though the Turkish soldiers displayed the greatest gallantry, the want of competent officers was from the first painfully manifest. Even while the army was being concentrated at Adrianople, the inefficiency of the officers was noted by European observers, one of whom, writing from that place on July the 24th, the letter being published in the *Standard* on the 9th August, after speaking in praise of the men who composed the army, remarked:—"But what shall I say of their officers? There are exceptions, and some few battalions are well conducted, as far, at least, as the outward appearance of the officers goes. But I have counted full fourteen battalions to-day

and yesterday whose officers looked the most dejected, demoralized, good-for-nothing set of wretches I could possibly imagine. . . . They have an indescribable air of dissipated, used-up vagabondage about them. They hang their heads; their eyes are sunk and vacant. If I could ship this motley crew to England, and exhibit them in public, I should not be able to find ten men to believe my statement that they were Turkish officers. I have never seen anything approaching to them in the Turkish army. It is disgraceful, and it makes my heart bleed to see such excellent soldiers led by such officers. The enthusiasm and sense of duty of the men may supply many deficiencies in the administration; but if they are capable of doing great deeds with officers like these, I shall proclaim the Turkish soldier to be invincible. Of one thing one may be tolerably sure: whether victorious or vanquished, the losses will be severe—extremely severe—on the Turkish side."

The truth of this prediction has already been shown; and it is certain that on more than one occasion important advantages that had been gained by the valour of the men were lost to the Turks through the inefficiency of the officers, who failed to send supports at the right time. The correspondent of the *Times* with the army of Suleiman Pasha, writing after the fighting which terminated on the 27th of August, and speaking of the way in which the Turks had been commanded, said:—"The valour of the Turkish troops needs no further eulogium, but there all praise begins and ends. . . . It is almost impossible to believe in the extent of supineness and indolence of the Turkish generals. It is no exaggeration to say that half of them are asleep all day, and apparently altogether indifferent as to how the days go. The blood of their soldiers is spilt in useless profusion on the hills, and battalion after battalion is annihilated without appearing to concern them in the least, as long as they can lie behind an earthwork, smoke cigarettes, and sip coffee."

After the failure of the attack on the 17th of September, there was a lull in the fighting for a few days, nothing being done beyond the exchange of a desultory artillery fire from beyond the intrenchments. On the 20th Suleiman Pasha placed in position some fresh mortars, and the bombardment recommenced, being principally directed

against Mount St. Nicholas. From the 21st to the 27th a large number of shells were thus thrown upon the rock, from which they rolled downward, killing or wounding every one they encountered. The first day or so fifteen men were thus hit, but the Russian soldiers very soon learnt how to protect themselves against this new kind of bombardment; and the Turks threw as many as 200 shells in one night without doing any harm, although the 6-inch mortars with which the Russian batteries were armed inflicted considerable losses upon the enemy, and on the 27th caused one of their powder magazines to explode.

Annoyed at seeing that their cannonade had no results, the Turks invented fresh means of rendering the position uncomfortable for the Russians. During the day they again swept the road along which passed the waggons carrying provisions for the garrison of the Pass. As soon as a waggon had been struck by a projectile, and he had been warned of the danger, General Radetzky consequently ordered that the provisions should again only be brought during the night. The Turks then pointed their guns very carefully at the corner of the road which was nearest their positions, and when they heard the sound of a cart, fired in the dark from all their pieces; but this cannonade not causing any serious harm, they very soon gave it up.

Sickness and disease also began to manifest themselves among the Turkish troops, the stench from the unburied bodies of both men and cattle, together with the absence of shelter, beginning to make their influence manifest. Among the victims to this neglect was Lieutenant Layard, of the 37th Regiment, the junior English military attaché with Suleiman Pasha's army, and nephew of the British ambassador at Constantinople. He was only twenty-five; but he had already distinguished himself in his career in India, more especially in the Topographical Department, his

knowledge of which rendered his services of peculiar use. Every honour that could be given was rendered to his remains, which were buried in the Greek monastery at Kazanlik. A battalion of troops followed the *cortège*, which was led by Captain Fife, Mr. Layard's colleague, who was accompanied by all the English and other foreigners present in the army, anxious to pay a last tribute of respect to the memory of one whose amiable character had made him a favourite with every one.

Some efforts were made by the Turks to remedy the above defects, but their losses by sickness continued for a time very heavy. Some difficulty also began to be experienced in the bringing up of stores and supplies; for although depôts of provisions had been established at Yeni Saghra and Philippopolis, the work of transporting them to the front had become very difficult, as heavy rains had made the roads almost impassable. The Turks, however, still maintained their fortified positions to the right and left of the Russian works, from which they kept up an artillery fire.

With the month of October came the cold weather. The Turkish soldiers, scantily clothed and without camping baggage, were obliged to abandon the heights they had occupied, and descend to less rigorous altitudes. They did not, however, cease harassing their adversaries, but the bad weather necessarily rendered their operations much less regular and active. As for the Russian garrison, it was installed in the Shipka Pass prepared for the winter, with all the comfort possible; and in the course of October, when the cold became more severe, 20,000 great-coats and 13,000 pairs of boots were sent them.

Early in October Suleiman Pasha was removed from the command of the Shipka army, his place being taken by Raouf Pasha, Minister of Marine. With this change of commanders we bring to a close our chapter on one of the most bloody episodes in the whole campaign.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Depression of the Russians after their Repulse of 30th July before Plevna—Brighter Prospects of the Turks—Strategic Position of the Combatants—Sortie of Osman Pasha on August 31—Description of Russian positions attacked—Contour of Country around Pelisat and Sgalievica—Dispositions of Russian Troops—Capture of a Russian Outwork by the Turks—Recapture by the Russians, and second capture by the Turks—Fierce Assault on the Pelisat Position—Successful Strategy of General Pomeranzoff—Attack between Sgalievica and Pelisat—Repeated and desperate Assaults by the Turks—The Outwork again retaken by the Russians—Entire Failure of the Sortie—The Losses on both sides—Fruitless result of Osman Pasha's Movement—Steps taken to complete the investment of Plevna—Importance of the Position of Lovatz—Decision to attack it—Respective Forces of the Defenders and Assaultants—Situation of Lovatz, and its system of Defences—Preparatory Bombardment of Turkish Positions—Capture of Positions on the right of the Osma, and of Lovatz itself—Desperate defence of the Garrison of the principal Redoubt—Advance of the Russians to storm it—The Assault and Capture—Effects of the Capture of Lovatz as regards Plevna—Another attempt on Plevna resolved upon—Sentimental reasons for choosing 11th of September for the purpose—Reasons urged for hastening the third attack on Plevna—The Lessons of Experience Lost—Contour of Country around Plevna—Osman Pasha's Girdle of Defensive Works—The Great Grivica Work—Fortifications on the East and South—Numbers and disposition of the Russian Forces—Advantages of Rapid-firing Arms of Precision to defenders of Fortresses—Sir Henry Havelock's estimate of the Force necessary to capture Plevna—Defective Execution of the Russian Plan—Great Preparatory Bombardment resolved upon—General Concentric movement upon Plevna—Commencement of the Cannonade—The Czar and Prince Charles proceed to view the Spectacle—Indefatigable Exertions of the Turks to repair Damages—Capture of a small Outwork of the Great Grivica—Severe Engagement on the Extreme Left—Skobelev fails in his first attempt upon the Sophia Redoubt—Increasing Severity of the Bombardment—Dawn of the 11th September—Inauspicious Weather—The Assault, nevertheless, resolved upon—Order of Attack—Opening of the United Cannonade—Vigorous Reply of the Turks—Osman Pasha first to assume the Offensive—Importance of Russian Positions on Extreme Left overlooked—Narrow Escape of General Skobelev—His impetuosity brings on the action prematurely—Death of the gallant Dobrovolsky—Capture of a Lunette—Preparations for attacking the Double Redoubt—Exciting Scene in the Storming of the Great Work—Its triumphant capture by the Russians—Kryloff's attack upon the formidable Circular Redoubt—Enthusiasm of the Russian Troops—Gallant and Determined Resistance of the Turks—Failure of the Attack—Operations on the Russian Right—Great inconvenience caused by the Fog, and consequent partial character of the Assault—Unexpected Obstacles on the way to the Grivica—Repulse of the Russo-Romanian Column—Discovery of one of the missing Brigades, and renewal of the Assault—Capture of the Great Grivica Redoubt—Depressing effect of the Immense Losses—The 12th brings a galling Surprise—Misfortunes of the Extreme Left—Terrible Onslaughts of the Turks to regain the Sophia Redoubt—Heroic defence by Skobelev—Vain Appeals for Reinforcements—Crushing Attack of Osman Pasha—The Russians driven from the Redoubt—Graphic description of Skobelev—Mistakes of Russian Strategy—Generalship of Osman Pasha—A Contrast in the Camp of General Zotoff—Awful Carnage and small result—Danger of Pestilence from the unburied Corpses—Severe Losses of the Turks—Exhaustion of both Combatants—Proceedings to capture the Second Grivica—Assault upon it repulsed.

WE have seen that the disastrous engagement at Plevna on 30th July was succeeded by a period of partial prostration of the Russian army, but that Osman Pasha made no attempt to follow up the great advantages he had gained. Elsewhere, however, the victory seemed to have inspired the Turks with a sanguine idea of accomplishing great things by taking the initiative; and before August had far advanced they offered so threatening an attitude, that on the line of the Jantra and in the Balkan Passes, as well as before Plevna, Russian reinforcements were in urgent request.

The Turks stood substantially on the defensive, but it was a threatening defensive, with occasional and ominous strokes of the offensive. Theoretically, at least, their situation seemed the better one, since they had the choice of alternatives. They could strike, if they considered the chances

justified their striking; they could adhere to the defensive, if this course promised better results. Moreover, while the first offensive action of the Russians would necessarily be concentrated against the Turkish Plevna front, it was in the power of the Turks to strike at the Russians simultaneously all round the edge of the broad oval now in Russian occupation in Bulgaria. Strategically, on the other hand, it was contended by many military critics that the Russians had an immense advantage in being able to rapidly concentrate their forces and strike with decisive effect at any given point of this oval. It was said that the position they occupied was "one that the great Napoleon would have delighted in," being one by which the Russian Commander-in-chief might easily fall with all his strength, first on one and then on the other Turkish army, and destroy them in detail. The centre station, however,

which Napoleon coveted was one between two armies, and not between two or three fortifications or intrenched camps, each serving as a solid support to an army which, from opposite flanks, threatened a line of retreat over a broad and treacherous river. Such criticism, moreover, reckoned without the influences of the electric telegraph upon modern warfare. The area of conflict in Bulgaria was a comparatively narrow one: the armies flanking the Russian forces were close to them, and not very distant from each other. Almost as soon as the Russian commanders had begun to operate in the Napoleonic style, advised by many as specific, that fact would have been known to the menaced army; and within an hour of the development of the attack, the other army would have been made acquainted with it. Under these circumstances—and considering that from behind their intrenchments either Osman Pasha or Mehemet Ali could have kept their enemy at bay until a Turkish force fell upon his rear—it seems hardly certain that the great Napoleon would have delighted in the Russian position in Bulgaria.

Even supposing the favourite Napoleonic conditions existed, to utilize them effectively would have required a general with an almost intuitive perception of the weakest points of his enemy, and with a rapid and daring strategy which at the right moment would not shrink from abandoning for a time a line once occupied. Such a military genius the Russians did not appear to possess; and having, by a degree of boldness out of proportion to their means of action, placed themselves in a somewhat critical position, their only safety now consisted in acting with sufficient caution until the arrival of anxiously looked-for reinforcements. In the meantime it was fortunate for the Czar that amongst the Turks there appeared no commander sufficiently shrewd to perceive, and bold enough to seize, his full military advantages.

If, during Suleiman's tremendous onslaughts on the positions of General Radetzky in the Balkans, two energetic attacks had been made concurrently, one against the Russian positions before Plevna, and another against the lines of the Czarewitch, it is extremely doubtful if they could have supplied the reinforcements by which alone the Shipka was retained, and the evacuation of that Pass would almost inevitably have entailed that of Gabrova and Tirnova.

There was a still further and urgent reason why Osman Pasha should have struck out vigorously about the beginning of August, if at all. Immediately after their defeat at the end of July the Russians commenced to throw up strong defensive works around Plevna, and every day added to the formidable difficulties in the way of a successful sortie. If Osman allowed the Grand-duke to dig trenches, make intrenchments, and construct redoubts, and made no attempt to destroy these works while in course of construction, it seemed improbable that he would hurl himself against them when completed and made valuable for defence, as he did on 31st August.

The only motives currently assigned for the sortie made by the commander of Plevna that day were, either that he wished to inaugurate the beginning of the great Mussulman fast, the Ramadan, by a grand destruction of infidels, or that, as the day was the anniversary of Abdul Hamid's accession to the throne, Osman Pasha wished to celebrate it by some brilliant success.

On this occasion, however, he committed the blunder which had been the cause of all the preceding Russian failures: he failed to support his assaulting columns, and brought too few men into action. His attack was so violent and sudden that the Russian redoubt nearest to Plevna was carried almost by surprise; but its capture could be made of little use to him unless followed up by an attack on the positions behind Poradim, which had been fortified by General Zotoff as a second line of defence, and sufficient troops were not brought forward to profit by the momentary advantage.

It was on the 30th August that the final arrangement was made by which Prince Charles of Roumania became commander of the army around Plevna, with General Zotoff as second in command; and it was on the following day, as if to inaugurate the new appointment, that Osman Pasha assumed the offensive, and directed an attack against the Russian positions—the only serious one attempted until the memorable outbreak of the 10th December. About seven o'clock on Friday morning, the 31st August, the sentinels posted between Pelisat and Sgalievica gave the alarm of the approach of a Turkish force.

In order to a proper understanding of the battle, it is necessary that some idea should be given of the Russian lines exposed to attack. On the north-

west of the village of Sgalievica there was a rounded hill, which commanded the road from Grivica. This hill was crowned with a very strong redoubt, and flanked by numerous intrenchments. Between this point and the village to the south there was a little valley, and beyond the village the ground rose into a series of long ramparts or cliffs, which extended for about two miles. These ramparts were fortified with four batteries and intrenchments, which commanded the whole plain below, while the position was further strengthened by several pools and marshes at the base of the cliffs. Further south the slope towards Plevna was not so steep, but was covered with oak-scrub, in itself a strong natural defence. Between this point and Pelisat there was another hill, also crowned with strong batteries, while still more to the south the ground gradually sloped in the direction of Bogot.

The space for the firing of the Russian batteries, both at Pelisat and Sgalievica, was rather limited, for some hills situated in front of them formed a long undulation, which masked the movements of Turkish forces issuing from Plevna, and enabled them to approach undisturbed to within a distance of 1000 to 1200 yards of the principal Russian batteries. On this undulation, however, a little lunette had been built, which formed the most advanced position of the Russians, and which was occupied by two companies with two cannon. On the left of the undulation the ground rose a little above the village of Pelisat, and formed a plateau slightly raised at its higher part; on the right of it were two steep hills separated by a deep ravine.

The Russian troops in the positions against which the Turkish sortie was directed were disposed in the following order:—The 5th Division, together with the 4th Cavalry Division, occupied the position to the north-west of Sgalievica, under the command of General Galitzen; the 30th Division were stationed on the ramparts south of Sgalievica; while the 16th Division, under General Pomerauzoff, were disposed of on the hill of Pelisat, and at either side of the village.

The movement of the Turks early in the morning was at once reported to the Russian commanders; but the success of any attack on their centre appeared so extremely improbable, that General Zotoff considered that Osman Pasha was simply entertaining him by a demonstration, while with the main body of his forces he intended to

attack the Roumanian army, which was somewhat isolated between the Isker and the Vid. Until he was more certain of the intentions of the enemy, he therefore determined to make no change whatever in the dispositions of his troops, but to keep all his reserves well in hand.

At eight o'clock the Turkish cavalry, which was divided into two bodies, advanced so as to threaten to turn the flanks of General Zotoff's Corps. At the same time a terrible fusillade commenced before the lunette. The Turkish infantry crowned the extremity of the plateau, and rushed forward with the cry of "Allah-il-Allah," while their batteries took up a position on the crest of the undulation. The two Russian companies which were in the lunette sustained the first assault; but in spite of the reinforcement of five companies of the Souzdal regiment, they were very soon obliged to retreat. Some fresh reinforcements, assisted by the fire of three batteries, enabled them, however, to again take the offensive. The Souzdal regiment accordingly rushed vigorously on the Turks, dislodged them from the lunette, and pursued them for a distance of about half a mile. In retreating the Turks attempted to carry away one of the guns from the lunette, but were obliged to abandon it.

After the short moment of calm which followed this incident, the attack was renewed with fresh energy. The Turkish masses increased without cessation, and their right wing outflanked the left of the Pelisat position, penetrated into the village, and set it on fire. A strong column advanced and again captured the lunette, while at the same time another detachment attempted to penetrate into the ground situated between this work and the left side of the position of Sgalievica, against which it established some batteries.

Between nine and eleven o'clock the Turks made a fierce assault on the Pelisat position, and advanced till quite close to the marshes and pools immediately beneath the ramparts, while the cavalry made a charge on the left. A company of tirailleurs were surrounded by these Circassians, and massacred to a man. The men of the 16th Russian Division, aided by their well-directed artillery, soon, however, drove back the Turks. About eleven o'clock General Pomerauzoff developed a strategic movement which had great influence on the fate of the day in this direction. He ordered his left wing to retire as if in orderly retreat, and the

Turks, falling into the trap, pressed forward with renewed vigour right into a little valley which drained the pools and marshes below Pelisat. Here the Russians made their stand, and half the artillery brought into action by them—namely, about twenty guns—were directed upon the Turks, of whom not fewer than 500 were left when the remainder retreated with some precipitation.

It was now noon. The compact masses of the Turkish infantry covered all the ground between Sgalievica and Pelisat, and the Turkish artillery fired without relaxation on the Russian line—the batteries of the latter and the sharpshooters answering with a fire equally well sustained. About one o'clock in the afternoon nearly 20,000 Turks were in line on the plateau, and simultaneously directed a desperate attack against the Russian positions, from the lunette of Pelisat to the right of Sgalievica. They descended the hill towards the Russian intrenchments at full speed, not in a mass, nor in line, but in little scattered and disorderly groups. The Russian intrenchments, in the meantime, flamed and smoked, and a storm of balls was poured into the advancing Turks. This lasted fifteen or twenty minutes, during which a fearful loss of life occurred. The Turks then began to withdraw, carrying off their wounded as they went. But apparently emboldened by their success in taking the lunette a second time, and believing they could also take this line, they had no sooner withdrawn from the Russian fire than they formed and attacked it again. They dived down into the valley of death to struggle there amid smoke and fire—a death struggle of giants; for there was nothing to choose between Russians and Turks on the score of bravery. Many Turkish corpses were found within ten feet of the Russian trenches. The little slope, on the crest of which the trenches were situated, was literally covered with dead, seven being counted on a space of not more than ten feet square. The fight here was terrible, but the Turks were again repulsed, and again they retreated up the hill. It was scarcely believed that they would attack again; but they did so. To any one who had watched the two preceding assaults it seemed madness; because it could be seen that the Russian fire never slackened an instant and that the Russian line never wavered, while masses of reserves were waiting behind the ridge, ready to fall in immediately if required.

The scene of carnage was again repeated; but it only lasted a moment. The Turks, completely broken, withdrew, sullenly firing, and taking time to carry off their wounded and many of their dead. Still they held the lunette, upon which they fell back, apparently with the intention of retaining it; but they were not allowed to remain there long. The Russians pursued them with a murderous fire, and then six companies attacked them with the bayonet, and swept them out of the work like a whirlwind.

Whilst this fight was proceeding on the Turkish right wing, the left wing made a determined assault on Sgalievica and the batteries near it—changing their front so as to bring their line face to face with the ramparts. Marching with much *elan* across the plain, which was here unobstructed by marsh or pool, they received the fusillade of the 30th Division, which had gone down into the open, and were drawn up in line with their supports resting on the village. Returning the fire in earnest, they continued their advance upon the batteries, being raked continuously by the artillery on the heights and by the guns of the redoubt on the Russian right. This attack was maintained with great fierceness till three o'clock, the Russians suffering very little loss, being protected for the most part by their intrenchments on the slopes. The artillery on the Turkish side kept up a strong cannonade on the heights, the village, and the camp of the hussars and 5th Division to the right; but little harm was done by them. Meantime the 30th Division made their attack, and advancing on the Turks, drove them back at the point of the bayonet. In the course of the battle two of the Vladimir regiments stationed in rear of Pelisat sent to General Pomeranzoff, and asked permission to take part in the battle; but perceiving that the Turks were held safe in hand with the troops already engaged, he declined. Practically the battle was over at four o'clock, for the Turks began slowly to retire; and between that hour and five the whole of the forty guns which lined the heights between Sgalievica and Pelisat directed a furious and well-directed fire upon the retreating enemy. General Zotoff, who had superintended the whole of the operations in person, ordered a pursuit; and on the left flank General Pomeranzoff directed a cavalry regiment and a battery of horse artillery to follow the Moslems. Taking the road to the left or south of Pelisat, this force debouched

into the plain; but before they had gone three miles or had overtaken the retreating troops, a strong force of Turkish infantry with three batteries of artillery was observed to issue from Tuccenica, with the object of attacking the flank of the pursuing troops, who thereupon wisely retired on Pelisat. The Turks lost about 2000 in killed and wounded, and the Russians thirty officers and 945 men.

Everything considered, the sortie was a well-directed and gallant effort on the part of Osman Pasha. It was made so suddenly and with such violence, that the Russian lunette was taken almost by surprise, in fact almost before General Zotoff knew the attack had begun. The whole enterprise, however, can only be regarded as a most useless and wasteful expenditure of blood. It was too extensive to be regarded as a mere reconnaissance, and far too feeble to break through the massive girdle now rapidly being drawn around Plevna. We say rapidly; for although the encircling line was as yet by no means complete, steps were being taken, even while the sortie was in progress, to hem in and thoroughly inclose Osman Pasha upon his most vital side—that is, the one by which alone he could now receive provisions and reinforcements, and which, moreover, was his most important line of retreat. This was the Sophia road, upon the south-western side of Plevna. Away some distance to the south-east of the latter town, however, the Turks held a strategic position of the highest importance, and one which, had it been occupied in strong force instead of Plevna, might possibly have caused much greater inconvenience to the Russians. We refer to Lovatz, the taking of which by the Russians and their subsequent evacuation of it we have already narrated in a preceding chapter. The forces of Osman Pasha had continued to occupy the place, but more as the strongest outwork of the main fortifications of Plevna than as possessing much strategic importance of its own. Held thus, it was a constant menace to the extreme left of the Russian line; it prevented the complete environment of Plevna; and in assaulting the latter place, the Russians were liable at any moment to be taken in the rear by a force issuing from Lovatz. It was evidently necessary, therefore, that the latter place should be captured before success could be insured to the Russian operations around Plevna, and efforts would doubtless have been made earlier

with this view had the Grand-duke Nicholas been able to spare what was considered the requisite numbers for the purpose. The project was a favourite one with General Skobelev, who was in command of the Russian extreme left, and who on the 6th August pushed a strong reconnaissance against the town. So near, indeed, did the men approach, that they were with difficulty restrained from an assault, and in the artillery duel which took place several of the reconnoitring force were killed. As the end of August approached, and the Russians began once more to contemplate the taking of Plevna, it was decided to drive in, if possible, this extended and formidable outpost, and thus to eject the Turks from a position they had successfully maintained since the 17th July.

A considerable force was accordingly despatched for the purpose, the chief command being given to Major-general Prince Imeretinsky. Imeretia, we may observe, is an important principality in the Caucasus, and the Prince was a descendant of one of the ancient sovereigns who voluntarily yielded to Russia. Associated with him was Skobelev, bent now on realizing a long-cherished project, Dobrovolsky, Rasgildaieff, and several other very able generals. The entire attacking force numbered nearly 22,000, well supplied with artillery and everything necessary for what was regarded as a difficult and hazardous enterprise. The impression of the Russians was that the numbers of their enemy were nearly equal to their own, and that on an emergency the Lovatz garrison would doubtless be reinforced from Plevna by Osman Pasha. Imeretinsky was astonished subsequently to find that the defenders only numbered about 7000, or less than a third of his own force; and although the disparity of numbers was naturally somewhat compensated for by the great strength of the positions defended, there can be no question that the highest courage and skill were displayed by the Turks in the desperate tenacity with which they held the place against such odds, and ultimately withdrew without losing a single gun.

Lovatz is situated in an amphitheatre, about 1200 yards in diameter at the bottom and ten miles at the summit, formed by the crests of encircling hills. These hills are about 600 feet above the valley, and descend generally in a gentle slope towards the town. The Osma flows across the amphitheatre, the sides of which at the time of the attack were covered with corn and

maize, and dotted with thick clusters of trees, which, with the help of some ravines, formed a good shelter for assailants debouching into the bottom of the valley. On the right of the Osma the ridges of the amphitheatre formed four principal peaks, which the Russians designated in their official reports by the numbers, 1, 2, 3, and 4. They also called No. 1 Mont Rouge (Red Mountain). Behind this first chain are two other heights, between which the road from Selvi to Lovatz passes. The Russians called them Mount A and Mount B.

The four heights and Mount A had been fortified with much care by the Turks. On the left of the Osma they had not raised intrenchments, but had constructed a formidable redoubt on an isolated hill, situated at the bottom of the valley behind Lovatz, and close to the road to Plevna. Besides these fortifications, they had dug trenches and ditches for sharpshooters in all directions.

On the 31st August General Skobelev's column was ordered to advance on the road from Selvi to Lovatz, to seize the two hills (Mounts A and B), for the purpose of establishing batteries there, and of executing the necessary works preparatory to an attack. The capture of the town had, as we have said, for some time been the favourite project of General Skobelev, and he executed his orders with a success to which Prince Imeretinsky in his report rendered full justice—"The reputation which this brilliant General has acquired by his military talents and bravery is," said he, "known by the whole army, and it is sufficient for me to say that it is principally to him that I owe the success obtained at Lovatz."

The Prince wrote not a word too much in praise of his brilliant subordinate, for the comparative ease with which all the Russian operations were subsequently carried out was undoubtedly due to the skill and tact as well as the fighting qualities of Skobelev. During even to an extravagant rashness he had often been, but he proved on this occasion fully equal also to the responsibilities of high command. His dispositions of the artillery and of the troops under his command on the 2nd September were such as to leave no chance for doubt as to the success of the assaults on the following day. Skobelev's strategy also reduced the Russian losses to a minimum, and after the preparatory cannonading the four peaks to which we have referred were carried with colours flying

and bands playing, and with the appearance more of a grand field-day manœuvre than an operation of real and deadly warfare. It was not till the assault on the great redoubt on the Lovatz-Plevna road that the Russian losses became really serious. The tactics of Skobelev were indicated in an order of the day which he issued as chief in command of the actual attack, and which is worth reproducing here as characteristic of a general respecting whom we shall have much to record:—

"In the first part of the battle about to take place the preponderating share will belong to the artillery. The order of attack will be communicated to the commanders of the batteries, who are requested not to scatter their fire. When the infantry proceed to the attack, the artillery are to support them to the best of their power. Great vigilance is necessary; the fire ought to be quickened if the enemy unmasks reserves, and pushed to the extreme limit if an attacking column meets with an unexpected obstacle. In cases where the distance allows of it, grapeshot should be directed against the enemy's troops and trenches. The infantry should avoid disorder during the combat, and make a clear distinction between a forward movement and the attack. The sacred duty of succouring one's comrades should not be forgotten. The cartridges must not be wasted. It should be remembered that natural obstacles render the supply of ammunition difficult. I again remind the infantry of the importance of order and silence in battle. You should not shout 'Hurrah!' except in cases when the enemy are near, and when you are preparing to charge at the bayonet. I direct the attention of all the soldiers to the fact that in a bold attack the losses are minimized, and that a retreat—especially a disordered retreat—results in considerable losses and disgrace."

At six o'clock in the morning the fifty-six guns in position on the two heights of which Skobelev had previously taken possession opened fire, and almost half an hour passed by before the Turks replied from Mont Rouge and a battery erected on the Trojan road. Their shells were then well directed, and reached as far as the heights nearest the Selvi road, which served as the Russian head-quarters during the first part of the battle. The superiority of the Turkish arms was again manifested on this occasion. The Krupp guns, with which the defences of Lovatz were pro-

vided, had a greater range than those of the Russians, and it was impossible to silence any of the Turkish batteries, in spite of the great numerical superiority of guns on the side of the assailants. The effect of the Russian artillery fire upon the Turkish infantry lodged in the trenches of Mont Rouge and on the heights Nos. 2, 3, and 4, was, however, terrible; subjected for eight hours to a frightful cannonade, decimated by a storm of iron, the Turkish infantry became demoralized by the time the assault was commenced, and was entirely unable to sustain the shock. Skobelev's report, when mentioning this fact, contained a sort of indirect criticism on the manner in which the operations had previously been conducted at Plevna—"The smallness of the loss experienced by our columns while assaulting the first line of the enemy's works proved," it said, "how useful was the action of our artillery, and how important in actual warfare is this preparation for the attack of enemy's works."

Probably for no other engagement during the war were troops more thoroughly prepared in every respect, than for this attack upon what was regarded as the chief outwork of Plevna. The men were well rested and refreshed, extra rations were provided, and a special detachment was set apart for conveying supplies of water into the ranks—a more important duty than may at first appear, the day of assault being so insufferably hot that, in spite of every care, many of the men were rendered quite ill and had to leave the ranks.

Prince Imeretinsky's force was divided into two columns—the right being confided to General Dobrovolsky, while Skobelev commanded the left in person. Neither column was to move until two o'clock, when the left was to commence the attack. Events, however, entirely disarranged this plan. When the Turks commenced to reply to the Russian artillery, they not only opened fire on the artillery of Skobelev which had challenged them, but directed a furious cannonade upon Dobrovolsky's, which remained silent. So accurate, too, was the Turkish fire that the Russian right suffered severely before it had fired a single shot in return. Nothing is more demoralizing to troops than to have to remain still and be thus slowly decimated by an enemy; and clearly perceiving this, Dobrovolsky at once decided to attack height No. 4, which was in front of his

position, in order to diminish the losses of his own men.

In spite, therefore, of the difficulties caused by the intense heat and the fearful stream of musketry fire poured by the Turks into the advancing columns, the intrenchments of No. 4 and the work itself were carried by assault, and the Turks driven back to the other side of the Osma. The Russians thus found themselves masters of the northern section of the amphitheatre; and they hastened to construct a battery there which, in conjunction with Skobelev's artillery, directed a fire against Mont Rouge, where the Turks had formed numerous intrenchments, and which was the key to the right bank of the river.

Dobrovolsky had accomplished his task by about ten in the morning, and soon after mid-day Prince Imeretinsky ordered the advance of the left column. General Rasgildaieff was intrusted with the capture of heights Nos. 2 and 3, while Skobelev reserved to himself what was thought would be the rather perilous honour of attacking Mont Rouge with the remainder of his troops. The task in each case, however, had, as we have seen, been rendered far less arduous by the preparatory artillery fire, and the capture of the three works was effected without any serious loss or difficulty. In less than an hour the three positions were taken, and by about half-past one o'clock the whole of the right bank of the Osma was in the hands of the Russians, as well as the town of Lovatz itself.

The great redoubt on the Plevna road, however, the strongest of all the Turkish works, was still to be taken. The success hitherto obtained by the Russians was of little account while this great redoubt remained, for it commanded the valley at the bottom of the amphitheatre, and had outlying detached works to flank any attacking force. Preparations were at once made to accomplish this most difficult part of the day's work. In addition to the guns Skobelev had already placed in position on Mont Rouge, two fresh batteries were stationed on the Selvi road, and all the Russian artillery, nearly 100 guns, blazed away at the great redoubt with a terrific report, which was greatly increased by the thunder-like echo thrown back from the surrounding rocks.

The Turkish commander appeared to consider, now that the attention of the whole Russian force was concentrated upon him, that the capture of

this, his strongest fortification, was a foregone conclusion. For instead of replying with artillery fire he withdrew his guns to the hills at the back of the redoubt. He resolved, however, to sell his stronghold as dearly as possible, and the result was a scene of sanguinary butchery which had few parallels during the whole course of the war.

At half-past five in the afternoon, judging that the attack had been sufficiently prepared for, Prince Imeretinsky ordered the assault.

Between the foot of the amphitheatre of hills at which the principal attacking force (Dobrovolsky's right column) had at this time arrived, and the base of the hill on which the redoubt was placed, there was a plain about 900 yards wide, forming the centre of the valley. The troops were obliged to cross this plain under fire from the Turkish infantry, who were sheltered behind their parapets.

On leaving their shelter the Russians entered a meadow varying from 100 to 400 yards in width. Then came the river Osma, which was about twenty yards wide and a foot deep. The Plevna road ran along the side of the river, and it was at that time bordered by sheds full of straw, behind which the assailants might hope to shelter themselves for a short time; and between this road and the bottom of the height on which the redoubt was placed was an old Turkish cemetery about 450 yards in breadth.

The redoubt was a long, rectangular oblong, of about 160 yards a side to the long faces, and 60 yards to the two short ones, with a heavy 24-foot parapet, on which the Russian shells had made scarcely any impression, and a proportionate ditch. The hill on which it stood was some 300 feet in height at the part facing the Russian attacking column, and through a strange want of foresight the Turks had not dug any trenches from which they could effectually sweep its face. Along the road and the left bank of the Osma there were several undulations in the ground high enough to shelter a man bending down, and these places were all pointed out to serve as resting-places on the way to the height. In the cemetery there were also a large number of upright stones of which the soldiers could take advantage.

The order to attack having been given, the men rushed across the valley amid a perfect hail-storm of bullets. In a few minutes the green sward of the valley and the white pebbles of the Osma banks were dotted with dead and wounded

Russians, and the survivors were resting under the little ridges of the *chaussée* and the Osma. The men advanced in open order at a rush, and the Turks kept up a steady stream of fire. There was not the slightest break in the rain of bullets, and yet it was wonderful to see how comparatively small a proportion of the shots took effect. Sometimes a single soldier would run across the whole space between the road and the hill of the redoubt; and though it could be seen how every bullet hit around him, he generally got across unhurt. There were periods of several minutes when no Russian was under fire, and yet the Turks never ceased, from which it appeared that they were firing over the parapets without looking to see from whence their enemy was coming. This was confirmed by the Russians, who declared that they never saw even a head above the bank of earth. The interest was intensely absorbing, it being one of those very exceptional instances in modern wars in which, owing to the conformation of the ground, spectators could see every movement as distinctly as from the gallery of a theatre, while here was no mimic war, but real slaughter, as the plain spotted with prostrate figures could testify.

As the decisive moment approached, the men along the Lovatz front of the work opened a fire from behind trees and small mounds, and drew the bulk of the Turkish fire in their direction, when suddenly about fifty Russians made a rush upon the opposite or eastern face of the redoubt, and approached to within fifty yards of the ditch. It seemed as if this must have been a wild freak of the men themselves, as no officer could be supposed to have sent such a force to attack the fortification. The Turks opened a tremendous fire; the Russians halted and fired a moment, and then fell back without losing a man, the Moslems firing over their heads. For twenty minutes longer there was kept up the same unrelenting murderous roll of rifle and artillery fire, which had now been poured upon the redoubt for two hours. But at last the Russians managed to collect several hundred men in a comparatively sheltered spot, under the brow of the mound on which the redoubt stood. Here the Turks could not see them. Their attention was further distracted on other points, when suddenly, in a moment, a rush was made by the stormers up the eastern slope, headed by the colonel of the 5th regiment, with only a cane in

his hand. The Russians rushed up in open order, keeping a steady stream of reinforcements following the advance. A perfect deluge of shells was poured upon the redoubt from the Russian batteries as the men ran up the slope; while the Turkish infantry fire was incessant, and if it had been well directed every Russian would have been shot down. As it was, many dark uniforms dotted the light surface of the grassless slope. This was the most exciting moment of the assault. The spectators on the height held their breath. The Russian artillery ceased firing, and the men leaped into the ditch and clambered up the parapet, while another column rushed along the Lovatz face of the redoubt to clear the advance trenches. When the Russians cleared the parapet and poured into the work, the defenders turned and made for the only outlet, the gorge of the redoubt. A long traverse, in a T shape, with the head of the T towards the Russians and the foot near the gorge, ran the whole length of the redoubt; and this cross-piece and the front parapet at once swarmed with Russians, firing down on the mass trying to crowd out of the narrow opening, and tumbling over each other in the attempt. To make matters worse for the Turks, an ammunition cart, also making for the exit, had its horses shot and blocked the entrance. Accordingly, for five minutes there was a perfect hail of bullets into the backs of the flying, writhing mass. The result was a heap of dead and wounded almost as high as the parapet, jammed inextricably together. Finding escape impossible, most of the Turks turned and fought to the last. Quarter was neither asked nor offered, and when their last cartridge was gone the Turks grappled with their assailants in all the impetuosity of despair. There was a fierce hand-to-hand struggle, in which, when bayonets and butt-ends of muskets could no longer be used, they used their fists to defend themselves. Russ and Turk alike were inspired with equal fury, and the monstrous slaughter ended only for want of victims. To complete the horrible scene, fire broke out in several parts of the redoubt, and the butchery was finished by the lurid glare of the flames.

One of the spectators who had witnessed the battle, and afterwards entered the redoubt, wrote:—"Riding up the slope where the Russians had charged the redoubt, I was surprised to find so few dead. They were all shot in the neck and head, showing that the Turks had fired over their

enemies. Entering the redoubt, I found scattered corpses of Turks and Russians thickly strewn the ground; but when I had reached the western end by that fatal gorge and traverse, a fearful spectacle presented itself. A space fifty feet long and about twenty feet wide was covered with Turkish dead and wounded to a depth of five feet. The living and dead were lying on each other in a dense mass, steaming with heat and blood. Around this Moslem pile was a fringe of dead Russians, showing that there had been a fearful struggle in this fatal space. Russian soldiers were standing upon this mass of humanity, working manfully to separate the living from the dead. The corpses were flung on one side, and the wounded helped to a place of comparative comfort, where they could lean against the earthworks. For half an hour I watched this work, and yet they had made scarcely an impression upon that fearful pile of Moslems. I never could have imagined that human forms could become so inextricably mixed up as they were in this bleeding hecatomb. Many were found breathing after they had been thrown on one side as dead, but the greater number would never breathe again."

The Russian losses in the affair amounted to 320 killed and 1200 wounded, while the killed and wounded of the Turks were estimated at more than 3000, judging by the numbers found in and about the several works. Those of the Lovatz garrison who escaped took a westward direction, and, with their guns, successfully eluded the small force sent in pursuit—a fact which speaks a great deal for the good generalship of the Turkish commander, considering the large preponderance of Russian troops engaged.

The capture of Lovatz, and the presence there of some 20,000 men, completely altered the aspect of affairs on the whole Russian left flank. Indeed, it was an event of immense strategic importance; for not only did Prince Imeretinsky now seriously menace the Turkish right flank, but he might with little trouble obtain command of the road to Sophia, which was by far the shortest for Osman Pasha's line of retreat; while in his present position he could thoroughly prevent the junction of Suleiman Pasha's army from Shipka, by way of the Trojan and Kalofer Passes, with the Plevna army. With the Roumanian army of 30,000 men resting on the Vid, the Russians about 40,000

strong in front of Plevna, extending from Karajac to Sgalievica, Pelisat, and Bogot, and Prince Imeretinsky moving up from the Lovatz or southern side of Plevna with about 20,000 men, Osman Pasha was all but surrounded on three sides, and unquestionably would speedily have stood in a very precarious position had the Russians been capable of utilizing to the utmost their great strategic advantages. The tactics adopted in their third assault upon Plevna were, however, sufficient to prove that such capacity was altogether wanting.

For a whole month the two adversaries within and around this Bulgarian town had now remained face to face in their respective positions, the Russians having employed this time by forming a vast intrenched camp opposite that which Osman Pasha had so brilliantly defended. They thus secured a strong base of operations, and freed themselves from the danger of the disaster which might have befallen them on the 30th July had they been pursued. Before the double experience of Plevna a very numerous school existed in the Russian army, which condemned entirely the system of trenches. "They are only good for cowards," said these officers. But the marvellous use which the Turks made of them had promptly altered this opinion. The great sortie of August 31 found the Russian intrenchments completed, and to them was due the comparative ease with which the Turks had then been forced back.

The month of August, indeed, had been so well employed by the Russians, that by the early days of September they began to contemplate another attempt upon the strong position of Osman Pasha. The satisfactory arrangement for the co-operation of the Roumanian troops; the arrival of Prince Charles at Poradim to take the command in person; and the fact of the Grand-duke Nicholas and the Emperor removing their head-quarters nearer to the stronghold of Osman Pasha—all pointed to the speedy resumption of active measures against Plevna. The sortie of the Turks on the 31st August evidently caused no hesitation in this intention, as we have seen by the fact that only two or three days afterwards the necessary preliminary step to an assault upon Plevna was taken by the capture of Lovatz.

The result of the council of war, held after the arrival of the Emperor, was a decision to renew the attack on Plevna on the 11th September. The reason why this date was chosen was partly,

at least, of the same sentimental character as that which was supposed to have caused Osman Pasha to select the 31st August for the sortie we have before described. It was the fête of the Emperor, and the commanders of his troops wished to place Plevna at his feet that day. It is said that in the council of war at which this date was discussed, the chief of the Staff, Nepokoitschitzky, in vain endeavoured to have it deferred, on the ground that they were not sufficiently prepared to be sure of success. The concentration of troops before Plevna, he said, had not been completed, and the army had not a sufficient quantity of stores and ammunition to make sure of continuing the action when once commenced.

But in addition to the sentimental reason connected with the Emperor's fête day, it was held at the council that there were other and graver ones for pushing on an enterprise for which the Russians were not yet ready. Mehmet Ali was assuming a menacing attitude along the line of the Lom, while the recent increased activity of Suleiman Pasha in the Shipka Pass seemed to indicate a determination on his part to make his way, if possible, to the north of the Balkans. Should the efforts of either of these Turkish generals be attended with any degree of success, the difficulty of the task now before the Russians would be immensely increased; while if Plevna could only be taken, sufficient troops would be set free to remove any apprehension of danger from other Turkish forces, however numerous.

Having finally decided on an attack, it might have been expected that the Russians would adopt such tactics for the proposed assault as would insure at least a probable chance of success. Strange to say, however, the actual measures taken showed that the lessons of the previous failures had nearly all been lost upon the Russian Staff, and a repetition of the mistakes and the lack of united action which were conspicuous on the 30th July was now to cost them the useless sacrifice of 20,000 more brave men.

Before proceeding, however, to describe this third attack upon Plevna—a place previous to the war comparatively unknown, but now renowned for its splendid defence—it will be convenient to give briefly a general idea of the contour of the country immediately around the town, and of the preparations for resistance made by Osman Pasha.

From Sgalievica and Pelisat westward the land rose with a gentle ascent for about three miles till it became a ridge, which swept westwards, with two arms—one to the north, and the other to the south. These arms stretched away for a mile and a half past Plevna, when, converging inwards, they terminated in somewhat abrupt bluffs or cliffs. The figure of the ridge was thus like a gigantic capital letter **U**, and about midway down the south arm was the village of Bogot, while on the southern slope of the north arm was the hamlet of Grivica, the ridge terminating with the precipitous fortified bluff of Plizitza. But another ridge, which had an important bearing on the whole scene of action, ran down the centre of the immense amphitheatre. This centre ridge may be called the Radisovo ridge, and terminated in a cliff a little south-west of Plevna. Between the Radisovo and the Grivica ridges was a deep valley, at the western end of which was Plevna, situated in a charming dell, and in the centre of this valley was a sinuous range of small hills or knolls. A fourth ridge, running north and south, connected with the two arms of the **U**, formed a kind of cover to the cup. The half circle at the eastern end of the amphitheatre was well wooded. Trees were also dotted all over the Radisovo ridge. Near Bogot there were thriving plantations and much undergrowth; and in the cross section, west of Plevna, the hills were covered by trees and vineyards.

The numbers of Osman Pasha's army were about the same as at the time of the previous attack on the 30th July; the reinforcements which had reached him, unmolested by the Russians, having filled up the gaps caused by that engagement. But if the strength of his army was but little altered, that was not the case with the positions it occupied, for these he had not ceased to strengthen and extend. Instead of harassing the Russians, he preferred—except on the occasion of his sortie on the 31st August—directing all his energies to completing the intrenchments to which he had twice owed a victory. He was persuaded that so long as he remained in the place, like a dagger in the side of the Russians, the army of invasion could not think of marching forward, and for five months events showed that his view was correct. He therefore occupied himself in increasing to the very utmost the means of resistance which Plevna afforded.

Behind the first line, against which Generals

Krudener and Schachowskoi had dashed themselves in vain, he formed a second, and then a third—thus covering the town with a triple breastplate. In the beginning of September there was not around Plevna a single height, undulation of the ground, or defensive point which had not been fortified. About a score of "tabias," or redoubts, of more or less importance, of admirable construction and great strength, were placed in positions which testified to a keen strategic foresight on the part of Osman Pasha with which no Turkish general had been credited. These works divided themselves naturally into northern and southern, being separated from each other by the road from Plevna to Bulgareni which passed by Grivica. In general contour they presented almost exactly the form of a sickle, of which the handle was on the south of Plevna, the curve at Grivica, and the point at Bukova. The northern works were all erected on the crest of a chain of little hills running parallel with the Grivica stream. At the eastern extremity of the chain was situated the famous great Grivica redoubt, which Krudener in vain endeavoured to take on the 30th July. It was then considered the key of the Plevna position; and Osman Pasha, expecting that at the next attack the Russians would concentrate all their efforts upon this point, made skilful arrangements for rendering it completely useless in case of its being captured and turned against him. To attain this object, he caused a second redoubt to be constructed 200 yards behind it, hidden from the sight of the enemy by the nature of the ground, which completely commanded the first; so that even if the Russians, with inevitably enormous loss, should take work No. 1, they would not find themselves any further advanced than before, and would obtain no other advantage than the possession of ground swept by the Turkish guns from work No. 2.

The Grivica redoubt frowned midway on the ridge, just above the village of that name. North-west of it was another very strong redoubt, while a third connected it with an intrenched camp, which was materially strengthened by bastioned batteries at its eastern angles. On the crest and slope of the ridge, away towards Plizitza, were two other intrenched camps, and the precipitous headland of Plizitza was also strongly fortified. In the valley, right in front or due east of the town of Plevna, was a continuation

of the knolls which began with that on which the Russian guns of position were planted. The most easterly (just at the curve of the sickle) was crowned with a large circular redoubt, flanked by a square fort of great strength. Behind this first position were three small hills, each crowned with a redoubt and connected by a lunette or half-moon. South-east of Plevna, and between that town and Radisovo, was a very large redoubt on the top of a conical hill, with another just overlooking Plevna, a little way to the north. A small ridge south of Plevna, trending westward, was fortified by intrenchments, and a square double redoubt had been constructed on a cross ridge in the angle formed by the Lovatz and the Sophia roads; while further west, dominating the latter, were three other works, one being the formidable work known as the Krisin redoubt.

The redoubts on the south of the town were linked together by a covered way, and they entirely commanded the Lovatz road, and the boundary of the road coming into Plevna from the valley of Widdin, which might otherwise have been utilized in a turning movement. The position had been rendered such that it was almost obliged to be attacked and taken as a whole. If the northern ridge were taken and occupied in its integrity, the position of the central swell would not be materially impaired; and if a lodgment were effected on the central swell, that lodgment would be commanded by the northern ridge and the redoubts on the south of the town.

Altogether there were fifteen redoubts of considerable strength, besides several connecting lunettes or half-moons, three intrenched camps, and a strongly fortified position on the headland of Plizitza, at the western extremity of the northern series.

Previous to the third assault on Plevna now being prepared, the Grivica redoubt, called by the Turks "Kerim Tabia," was regarded by the Russians as the strongest of Osman Pasha's works. This, however, was only because of the fearful losses sustained in the effort to take it on the 30th July. They had had less experience of the others, or it would have been known, that so far from being the "key of Plevna," it was nothing more than the most advanced, and at the same time, lowest tabia inclosing the Plevna valley on the north. The Grivica redoubt constituted in reality the only part of Plevna's fortifications which was

not covered by efficient cross-fires, and it was the only redoubt the natural position of which was not eminently strong—that is, it was the only one which did not dominate a steep incline.

As a general rule the larger earthworks were mounted on the summit of hills from 100 to 500 feet in height, and whose slopes afforded no sort of cover to an assaulting force. Here and there in the earthwork the black mouth of a gun appeared through the neatly cut embrasures. The garrison, during a bombardment, kept quietly inside the bomb-proof casemates, and the Turks, for economical reasons, seldom replied too vigorously to a mere cannonade, reserving their projectiles for a serious attack. The steep bastions were guarded by a ditch of a yard's depth and double that width. About ten yards in front of the fort a trench, whose depth allowed the soldiers to stand upright without exposing more than their heads, was sunk. This trench was filled with soldiers, their rifles resting on small supports of loose stone or wood prepared beforehand, and extended to the rear of the tabia, allowing the defenders to take refuge in the interior of the fortress. A second trench was cut at another ten yards further on, and similarly furnished with means of defence and of escape. Exposed to the fire of the guns in the tabia, the assailants had to ascend a long and steep slope until they came under range of the riflemen in the outer trench. They had to take this first line by assault, exposing themselves the whole time to the fullest extent, whilst it was next to useless for them to use their arms against opponents whose heads were scarcely visible. Having succeeded in driving the Turks out of the ditch, they were obliged to scramble over it under the ferocious fire of the inner trenches. Finally, they found themselves in the moat of the redoubt, and obliged to resort to scaling-ladders in order to get a chance of closing with the inner garrison. Such was the character of most of the redoubts around Plevna. On no occasion, perhaps, since the introduction of modern fire-arms, had the advantages which the garrison of a well-constructed fort, when situated on a height, possessed over its assailants, been brought so strongly to light as by Osman Pasha's defences.

With what forces were the Russians going to attempt the capture of this immense intrenched and fortified camp? Three Roumanian divisions, the

2nd, 3rd, and 4th, commenced the line of battle on the north; at 10,000 men to a division they made up 30,000 men; then, to the east and south-east, came the 9th Russian Corps, General Krudener's, composed of the 5th and 31st Divisions, 18,000 men with the reinforcements received to supply their losses. The Roumanians and Krudener's force constituted the Russian right. The left, or perhaps more properly speaking, the centre, was composed of the 4th Corps, General Krylof's, containing the 16th and 30th Divisions, 20,000 men; while the 2nd Division, under General Prince Imeretinsky, 12,000 men, and the 4th brigade of chasseurs under General Dobrovolsky, 3000 men, formed the extreme left. Altogether about 80,000 infantry. The cavalry was subdivided as follows:—the 4th Division, 2000; the 9th Division, 2000; one brigade of the 11th Cavalry Division, 1000; one brigade of Circassian Cossacks, 1000; a portion of the Imperial escort, 200; and the 1st Roumanian Division, 2000; total of cavalry, about 8000. The Russian artillery was estimated at 300 guns, in addition to twenty heavy pieces at first intended for use at the siege of Rustchuk, but sent on to Plevna at the end of August; the Roumanian artillery comprised 106 guns.

Evidently, the forces of the Russo-Roumanian army were sufficient to warrant the expectation of some important and decisive results. With a much less formidable array Waterloo was won, as also had been many other engagements on which the destinies of nations hung; and the task now before this imposing force was the taking of what, a few months before, had been only an open country town where not a gun nor a soldier was to be found.

As we have shown, however, the case was now vastly different, for the military genius of a Moslem general had given to this place the strength of a Sebastopol, and it could now hold a host of assailants at bay as effectually as did the ramparts of Metz and Paris in 1870–71. The Russians had had ample opportunity of convincing themselves of this. Since the disasters of the 30th July they had seen the strong works which then defeated them multiplied on every available defensive spot; they were aware that Osman Pasha had all this time been able to obtain reinforcements from the west and south-west sides of Plevna; and as the Russians estimated the strength of the Turks here at between 70,000 and 80,000 strong, although,

as a matter of fact, they were not more than 50,000, a force of 90,000 was clearly inadequate to the task of taking Osman Pasha's position by assault. Whatever might have been the case in former days, with weapons of an entirely primitive type, the Russians should have known that modern fire-arms, especially the repeating breechloader rifles with which the Turks were armed, had altogether altered the conditions of taking fortified places by storm. A defending force, well intrenched and strengthened by formidable redoubts, can now pour such a perfect stream of fire upon assaulting columns as to nearly annihilate them, without being seriously inconvenienced itself. The Germans, in their war with France in 1870, practically admitted the madness of such point-blank assaults by the numerous important sieges they then undertook; but after two unsuccessful attempts upon Plevna already, it would seem yet to have needed the sacrifice of an additional 20,000 lives to make this truth equally clear to Russian military leaders. Sir Henry Havelock, who was personally on the spot, and whose ability to judge of a military situation cannot be denied, estimated that 120,000 men was the very least number with which any attempt upon Plevna should at this time have been made; and there had been, in fact, a general impression that, unless assailed by the Turks, the Russians would not move until reinforced by the Guards. These could have been in Bulgaria in about a fortnight, but the military situation was presumed to be critical and to admit of no delay; and with a sort of belief in auguries, which still exists even among generals of civilized nations, it was apparently considered that the anniversary of the Emperor Alexander's coronation would be a favourable day for the perilous enterprise.

If this decision and the general plan of the Russian commanders were serious mistakes, the execution of the plan was also defective. We again meet with that style of fighting which we have already had occasion to criticize both on the side of the Russians and the Turks. Positions are approached from the front with a vigorous attack which, with a dash, repulses the enemy, and the first lines are occupied; then the enemy is reinforced, and the assailants repulsed with heavy loss: in these cases the losses are always great; a second attack follows upon the first, and as it is no better sustained, meets with the same fate. The struggle is kept up thus until the evening,

and if it is in an open country, the day belongs to the side which, at the decisive moment, can throw down the last card—that is, bring up a reserve of fresh troops; if it is a fight behind fortifications, the defenders in the evening re-occupy their first line, which the assailants gained during the day, but in which, for want of support, they could not maintain themselves. Under such a system of attack a brigade is despatched and gets repulsed, then a regiment is ordered to advance, then another, and so on one after another. It thus often happens that several regiments are decimated without any result, while an attack with considerable forces, advancing at the same time, would probably have secured the conquest of the positions with less loss than the repulse cost. On the day of the great assault, the 11th September, only a comparatively small portion of the Russo-Roumanian forces were completely engaged; only 40,000 men formed into line against the formidable positions we have described, and half the army remained in reserve, as if it had been destined for some other wholesale sacrifice. These tactics caused a Russian officer, on being asked a question concerning the battle, to exclaim — “Battle! this is not a battle; battles do not last six days. In a battle masses are deployed, but here we attack only with small instalments. It is not a siege either, for in a siege precautions are taken, parallels and approaches are made, things which we seem to have a great contempt for. Call it rather an operation of a new kind, which will succeed if God favours it.”

It was under circumstances such as we have described, when the bravery and obstinacy of the soldier were obliged to make up for the incompetency of his leaders, that the Russian army, on the 6th September, commenced a battle which continued a week, and was one of the most murderous of this century. After a month of inaction Plevna, with its amphitheatre of batteries, which rose one above another in wood and on hill, was attacked as though it were a citadel. The same redoubts were dyed seven times by the blood of the Russians, and six times by that of the Turks; captured one evening by one side and the next day retaken by the other; news announced by turns victory and defeat; and there, during all these events, was Osman Pasha, standing invincibly to his post, with his bands of soldiers scantily clothed

and fed, and whose wounds even were scarcely attended to, but all of whom seemed imbued with the unconquerable spirit of their leader. This was the dramatic spectacle on which Europe gazed; this was the series of extraordinary and changing scenes which despatches for eight days described to an astonished world, and which we now attempt to recount.

The Russian Staff had a strong impression that the check to Krudener and Schachowskoi on July 30 resulted from the fact, that the attack of the Turkish positions had not been sufficiently prepared for by bombardment. They therefore determined not to commit this blunder again, and decided that the assault fixed for the 11th should be preceded by a four days' cannonade. They brought together for this object a very respectable force of artillery, and the old Russian officers who were present at the engagement asserted that they had not heard such an uproar since Sebastopol. Their forces seemed so imposing that the only fear the Russians seemed to have was lest Osman Pasha should retire without fighting; a report of the evacuation of Plevna was even circulated for two days, with a persistency that did no honour to the scouts, a body of whom had been organized for service in the rear of the enemy; and in order to arrest a possible retreat of the Turkish army, General Loschkarew was sent to the Sophia road with a body of cavalry.

The first preparation for the preliminary cannonade was made during the afternoon of the 6th September, when the whole Russo-Roumanian army executed a general concentric movement upon the Turkish intrenchments. The 3rd and 4th Roumanian Divisions approached from Verbica towards Grivica; the 9th Corps left Karajoe-Bugarski to take up its position at the south of the same village; the 4th Corps advanced from Poradin and Pelisat towards Radisovo; and the divisions of Imeretinsky and Skobelev, which were at Bogot, also made a forward movement upon Plevna by the Lovatz road.

At eight o'clock in the evening the fatigue parties arrived at the places determined upon beforehand as the sites of the batteries which were to cannonade the Turkish redoubts. At the word of command thousands of men with shovels and pickaxes set to work with a will, while several lines of tirailleurs were posted in advance in order

to protect those engaged against any sortie on the part of the enemy. The night was dark, and so far favoured the Russians; for the Turks, with that contempt for outpost duty which was proverbial with them, were apparently unaware of the near approach of the enemy, and left the Muscovites undisturbed to make good their positions in the darkness. And this difficult operation was conducted with a great degree of skill. In order to assist the field artillery in a destructive cannonade against the formidable earthworks, it had been determined by the Grand-duke to bring up from Baneassa, in Roumania, two strong batteries of siege guns—being those to which we have already referred as having been originally intended for the siege of Rustchuk. For this purpose 1500 oxen were employed in dragging twenty of these large guns, with their platforms. The passage of the Danube was safely accomplished at the Sistova bridge, and by the night of September 6, at ten o'clock, they reached the Radisovo ridge, before Plevna. The guns consisted of four steel and sixteen bronze cannon; and between ten o'clock at night and five o'clock in the morning the working parties of the 9th Corps had erected these siege-gun batteries on the knolls in the valley, and batteries for field guns on the northern slope of the Radisovo ridge, and on the southern slope of that of Grivica; while on the crest of the latter ridge, to the north-west, the Roumanians had also established their batteries.

Although everything was ready at five o'clock for the commencement of the bombardment by the Russians, the mist, which hung close in the valley, prevented the Muscovite artillerymen from gaining their range; and it was not till half-past six o'clock that the first shell was sent on its shrieking journey towards the Moslem earthworks. That shell, followed by a general volley from the heavy siege guns, was evidently very much of a surprise to the Turks, who were in no small degree astonished, when the fog cleared away, to observe the Russian host, supported by admirably-constructed batteries, in a sort of semicircle, which threatened to inclose them. It was fully an hour and a half before a single Turkish gun had been fired in reply to the Russian cannon; but as soon as the Turks were fully aroused to the fact that the Russians had in reality begun the attack so long threatened, they set to work to return the fire with earnestness.

In a few minutes after the big battery had opened fire on the first line of Turkish redoubts, and while an eight-gun battery on the right in the valley was unmasked on the Grivica redoubt, battery after battery of field guns from the 5th and 31st Division trooped along the Radisovo ridge to the Russian centre, and got into position, till here and on the northern slope some sixty guns were pouring their deadly missiles upon the works on which Schachowskoi and Krudener had on the 30th July shattered their intrepid battalions. In the hollows behind each hill, in the dips of the ground on either flank of the batteries, and among the brushwood on Krudener's right, the men of the 5th and 31st Divisions were placed under cover, all safe at the present moment, for few shells from even the nearest of the Turkish redoubts found their way to this long range. Now and again, it is true, a shrapnel burst in the air, and the terrible song of the fragments was heard. Few casualties, however, occurred. On the brow of the wooded hill east of the village of Grivica, Krudener unmasked a field battery; at eight o'clock another came into play; half an hour afterwards the Roumanians sent forward their well equipped artillery on the crest of Grivica, towards Verbica, and developed a lively activity—directing their fire upon the great Grivica redoubt and its two companions. By eight o'clock the village of Radisovo, which had been evacuated by the Turks, was taken possession of by the Russians, and the batteries were pushed forward along the crest till two overlooked directly the first Turkish redoubt and the fort on the right. In another half hour a further advance was made, and now five batteries on this crest were playing on all the redoubts scattered on the eastern front of Plevna. Nor were the Turks slow to respond, and the eastern corner of the Radisovo ridge was in the course of the forenoon ploughed up with shells, which now and then dropped over the hill, and created a diversion among the troops hidden below the brushwood. By and by the line of the Turkish fire was discovered, and the troops were accordingly placed so as to be as much as possible out of it. About eleven o'clock the cannonade extended along the whole line, and the continued roll of guns was heard in the valley, and echoed from the hills, while quietly in the cover of standing maize, or behind friendly swells of the ground, the infantry stretched in fretful inactivity, as they

waited the command to rise and rush across the intervening slopes to the enemy's intrenchments. From certain points the Russians could see the Turks march and counter-march in their intrenched camps across the valley, or disappear behind the inequalities of the ground into positions better sheltered from the well-directed fire of their adversaries. Gleams of sunshine revealed at intervals the terrible strength of their positions, or lit up the precipitous cliffs of far-away Plizitza, tipped with white tents; or the darker lines of gabions and fascines which lined the works there.

Early in the afternoon the Emperor, the Grand-duke Nicholas, and Prince Charles of Roumania, accompanied by a brilliant suite, rode on to the battle-field. An observatory at the head of the valley, and out of all possible range, had been prepared for his Imperial Majesty; but he, with the Grand-duke, took up a position on a rounded knoll on the Grivica ridge, mid-way between the Roumanian batteries and Krudener's, and watched the bombardment for a couple of hours. The siege guns, having found their range, battered the first Turkish redoubt in the valley and the Grivica redoubt; and before the evening closed in both of these works were apparently much injured. By and by the fire slackened, and just before darkness set in there was a cessation of the cannonade; but during the night the great guns kept firing shells at the Grivica redoubt and the first redoubt in the valley at intervals of a quarter of an hour, to prevent the garrisons repairing the breaches under cover of darkness. In spite of this precaution, however, the Turks contrived to so thoroughly repair the breaches made in the parapets of "Kerim Tabia," that the fortress next day looked as neat as if it had only been just constructed.

The night was employed by the Russians in advancing their batteries and in carrying out a process of hemming in of the Turkish works, chiefly on the east, west, and south. Some of the heavy guns were moved nearer the Grivica work, as were also the Roumanian batteries; whilst on the left General Kryloff pushed some of his artillery fully half a mile forward in the Radisovo valley. The bombardment on the left of the Russian army had been much less violent on the first day, because the batteries there were too far distant from the Turkish works. In the course of the day, however, Kryloff brought his 4th Corps

round from Bogot so as to inclose Plevna on the left flank, and Prince Imeretinsky with the 2nd Division and portions of the 11th and 12th bore down in the same direction by the Lovatz road. Part of Imeretinsky's troops, to the number of 8000 or 10,000, were given to General Skobelev the younger, whose mission it was to occupy the extreme left flank, and advancing on either side of the Lovatz road to take up commanding positions at Krisin.

On the 8th, early in the morning, it was again the battery of heavy siege guns which gave the signal for the cannonade by a general volley; the bombardment recommenced with much greater fury than on the preceding day, and now as actively on the left as on the right. The spectacle was very imposing; artillery was roaring along a line fifteen miles in length; the summits of the hills were like the craters of volcanoes throwing out fire and smoke; shrapnel was bursting in the air, shells made the earth of the parapets fly in clouds of dust; at some points of the Turkish intrenchments conflagrations burst out: and as a contrast to this terrible scene of war, in the village of Grivica, under the hissing shells, were the Bulgarian peasants peacefully threshing their barley, according to their primitive fashion, upon a threshing floor of hardened clay: women made the horses trample out the sheaves on the endless circular paths, whilst men tossed up the chaff to catch the breeze.

The fire of the Russian artillery was decidedly superior to that of the Turks—that of the battery against Grivica especially being so admirably directed that shell after shell went straight into the redoubt. Every now and then the Turks were silent for a few minutes, and some of the most sanguine amongst the Russians began to think that the stubborn defence was abandoned, and that the defenders had departed. The pause, however, was but a short interval to repair damages; the Grivica fire would recommence as vigorously as ever, and the Turk would give abundant proof that when behind an earthwork, with a decided intention of remaining, he was by no means easy to dislodge.

The Roumanian artillery at this time, besides contributing its full share to the bombardment of Kerim Tabia, was also firing upon a small work situated in front of that large redoubt, to the left of the road from Verbica to Plevna. Their well managed fire silenced that of the small work, and

towards evening the Turks were seen to leave it and escape in groups to the line of trenches situated 200 yards to the rear. Shrapnel was aimed at them and inflicted serious losses; and Colonel Angelesco sent the 13th Dorobantzi and a battalion of the 5th Roumanian regiment of the line to occupy the abandoned positions. These troops immediately commenced repairing the works in order to turn them against the Turks. During the night the latter made an attempt to dislodge the Roumanians; but these hardy peasants, who now smelt powder for the first time, resisted courageously, and, after having lost thirty-one of their number, repulsed the enemy. The action was a sharp one, and the Czar recognized the gallant behaviour of the Dorobantzi by distributing amongst them forty crosses of St. George, whilst Prince Charles of Roumania decorated their colours with the star of Roumania.

The 8th of September, however, was chiefly remarkable for a rather serious engagement which took place on the extreme left, on the road from Lovatz to Plevna. We have stated that on this side the Russian positions were farther removed from those of the Turks than at the centre and right. In order to establish their artillery within good range, Skobelev and Imeretinsky executed a forward movement during the day. On this side the heights on which the Ottomans were intrenched formed an angle, the apex of which was turned towards Plevna; at the base and between the two sides of the angle was a rather high conical hill, partly covered with vines. The road from Lovatz passed along the left or western side of this height before entering Plevna.

Skobelev was ordered to advance and occupy this vine-clad hill, with the view of having a battery planted thereon, and he was, if possible, to take the Sophia redoubt, that is, the double one just beyond the hill between the Krisin redoubt and Radisovo. For this purpose he despatched a squadron of dragoons up the Lovatz road to feel the way along the face of the hill which intervened between him and the redoubt. Almost the moment they appeared on the crest the Turkish sharpshooters opened fire on the horsemen, and they retired in favour of the 4th brigade of tirailleurs, who came on at a fast pace through the vines and between the lanes of trees which lined the hill and slopes. The tirailleurs, supported by two regiments of the 2nd Division and by a

detachment of the 16th Division, advanced upon the Turks with a cheer, driving back the enemy's skirmishers, and taking possession of the hill. Skobelev's artillery then came upon the road and opened fire, which was returned with interest by the Krisin and double redoubts; but onwards the Russians moved, and the Turks retired under their heavy fire to a second knoll, also covered with wood. This also was stormed by the Russians, who, however, were now exposed to a most withering fire; and the Turks, having recovered breath, attacked Skobelev in turn on the second slope, just in front of the double redoubts. Four times the Russians drove back the Turks, and as often were the Turks successful in regaining their ground. So the struggle continued till about seven o'clock, when the efforts to reach the redoubt were put an end to by darkness and the stubborn resistance of the Turks. Skobelev, who lost nearly 1000 men in this attack, retired to the first hill of which he had gained possession, and there intrenched himself for the night. Advantage was taken of the darkness to construct there new batteries with which to assail the redoubts on this left flank of the Russians—the taking of these redoubts being the special task assigned to Skobelev in the forthcoming assault.

The hill of which Skobelev now remained master was the only point of all the positions of the Russians from which they could see the town of Plevna, as the heights which encircled it everywhere else hid it from the assailants' view. Through the valley traversed by the Lovatz road, at the extremity of the angle of which we have before spoken, the slender spires of its minarets could be seen peeping from the masses of foliage, two miles and a half distant at the most.

During the night of the 8th the bombardment continued, the intention of the Russians being to give the Mussulman artillerymen no rest. As on the preceding nights, the Russians constructed new batteries under cover of the darkness, and by the next morning had 220 cannon in line. The Roumanian artillery, which in this bombardment of Plevna won great honour from the qualities they displayed, also approached still nearer to the Grivica redoubt. One battery came up on level ground straight in front of it, and in spite of the enemy's fire, which was concentrated upon it, maintained its position. On the morning of the 9th the Turks, whose only care appeared to be the enter-

prises attempted by the Russian left, made a fresh sortie in the direction of Radisovo, and were driven back with great losses by the 16th Division.

During the whole of the 9th the cannonade continued with alternations of furious violence and comparative calm. Its effect was most noticeable on Kerim Tabia. The parapets, reduced little by little, were falling in at all points; the cannon, dismounted the one after the other, were momentarily silenced, and for some minutes one might have believed that the fire from the redoubt had completely ceased; but the Turkish artillerymen, with indomitable energy, again placed their pieces in position and recommenced firing. In the afternoon there was an interval of silence much longer than previous ones; the Roumanians seriously believed that the Turks had retired, and sent a reconnaissance towards the work, hoping to find it evacuated like the small lunette they had occupied the day before. The Turks allowed them to approach within a short distance, and then suddenly opened a brisk fusillade, which compelled them to beat a precipitate retreat. At nightfall several fires broke out in the redoubt.

Thinking the fire from the field artillery would suffice on future occasions to prevent the Turks from restoring their intrenchments at this point, General Zotoff, during the evening of the 9th, constructed a great battery above Radisovo, and in the course of the night had eight of the large siege guns transported there, to prepare for the attack on the left in the same way as it had been done on the right. During the night of the 9th the cannonade was kept up vigorously in the dark. The Turks, giving up the unequal duel, withdrew part of their artillery from Kerim Tabia, trusting for its defence to the energy of the Nizams and Redifs who made up the garrison. With the few guns left the redoubt was on the next day still able to reply, if only feebly, to the frightful cannonade directed upon it.

On the 10th, at five o'clock in the morning, the bombardment was resumed with renewed fury; the new siege battery established near Radisovo firing volley after volley into the Turkish camp. Osman Pasha's losses were this day considerable, and those of the Russians were largely in excess of the preceding days. The field batteries to the south were moved half-way down the side of the line of heights in front of Radisovo, of which they had as yet occupied only the crest,

and were then within very short range of the Turkish works.

In the evening the intrepid Skobeleff occupied a fresh height to the south-west, thus bringing himself much nearer to the redoubts erected on that side, and enabling him to cover on this side the grand assault ordered for the next day. Further along, on the extreme left, Loschkarew's cavalry repulsed on the Sophia road some Circassians whom Osman Pasha had sent to reconnoitre what would be his line of retreat in case he should be obliged to evacuate Plevna.

On the 10th the weather had been very dull—cloudy, rainy, and slightly foggy; the 11th proved, however, to be still worse. During the greater part of the night a thunderstorm raged with a fierceness which was appalling. From the west the gale swept down the valley in swaying blasts, and the floodgates of heaven being opened, the rain descended, not in showers, but in broad sheets, which, scattered and broken by the wind, dashed on the ground with tropical fury. Almost without a moment's intermission the lightning flashed across the sky, illuminating the vast amphitheatre with a weird, lurid glare. The trees on the ridges tossed their branches wildly, as if inspired with some demoniacal fury, the storm whistled through the brushwood, and the Indian corn bent and rustled before each succeeding blast with the sound of a cataract. As if in puny mockery of this war of the elements, the voices of a hundred cannon shrieked discordantly, while now and again there was a sputter of musketry, as either Turks or Russians believed that they were being surprised by an attack in the darkness. In that dread night there was little sleep for the combatants on either side.

When day broke the dampness of the mist, which had penetrated through any quantity of covering, constrained every one to leave their tents. The soldiers, assembled round scanty fires of burning roots, endeavoured to warm their benumbed limbs and to dry their heavy great-coats, made more cumbersome than usual by the night's rain which had soaked them. An impenetrable fog enveloped the summits of the hills as well as the bottom of the valleys, so that it was impossible for any one to see twenty yards in front, and efficient cannonade under such conditions was, of course, impossible. Prudence suggested postponing the attack to a more favourable day; but

it was the fête of the Emperor; and in spite of every disadvantage it was resolved that the battle should be commenced. The fog lasted all day, only clearing up a little between noon and two o'clock, soon after which it again became thicker, and settled down into a fine, close rain which chilled every one to the marrow.

The order of attack determined upon was as follows:—From nine till eleven o'clock in the morning an incessant general fire from all the batteries; from eleven till one, absolute rest; from one o'clock till three the fire was to be resumed with the same vigour; at three o'clock, a general attack along the whole line. On the extreme left, Imeretinsky was to attack the redoubts on the south-west, the chief of which were the Krisin and square double redoubts; at the centre, Kryloff was to attack the southern redoubts; the most formidable being the great circular one beyond Radisovo; while on the right, Krudener with the 9th Corps and General Cernat with the Roumanians were to attack the Grivica redoubt.

Precisely at nine o'clock the united cannonade commenced, and for two hours over 400 cannon rent the fog with the flight of shells and the force of their explosions. Indeed the veil of vapour, so horribly dispersed, lifted for a time, and all the batteries could be seen together vomiting fire.

The Turks replied with good will from all their fortifications; some of their artillerymen even mounted the parapets, which were quite exposed to the enemy, and from thence indicated to their comrades the point upon which to direct their fire. As fast as one of them rolled dead or wounded into the trench, his place was occupied by another. The Russians, who could appreciate courage even in an enemy, were filled with admiration: "Captain," said an artilleryman to his officer, "it is to be hoped that when the Emperor has taken Plevna, he will give the Cross of St. George to those fellows there!" Plevna was, however, far from being taken yet.

The Turks at last assumed the offensive. They made what was either another attack upon the Russian left or a strong reconnaissance in force, and consequently the battle commenced there some time before the hour fixed. It is indeed most extraordinary that the desperate anxiety of Osman Pasha not to allow himself to be pressed in at this point did not warn either the Grand-duke Nicholas, Prince Charles, or General Zottoff of the extreme importance of the

positions which Imeretinsky was about to attack. It was the vital point; if the south-western heights had been taken, Osman Pasha would have been obliged to evacuate Plevna; while to close round them, and bar the Sophia road, would cut off all supplies. In spite of the excessive inquietude the Turks manifested each time they were threatened at this point, the fact was entirely overlooked by every one on the Russian staff.

Skobeieff, at Plevna, found himself in the same position as at Lovatz; he was under the orders of Imeretinsky, but was intrusted with the direction of the attack. He had under his command the 1st brigade of the 16th Division, with General Tebiakine, composed of the Souzdal and Vladimir regiments; the 1st brigade of the 2nd Division, (the Libau and Kalouga regiments); the 2nd brigade of the 2nd Division (the Revel and Esthonia regiments); and the 4th brigade of chasseurs, with General Dobrovolsky.

At four o'clock in the morning he had posted, on the flank of the advanced height which had been captured the day before, twenty-four pieces of artillery. After the commencement of the cannonade at nine o'clock, he set out with two officers and six Cossacks to examine the Turkish positions, and in the fog approached so close to them that, with his well-known cap, tunic, and horse, each of a white colour, he drew upon himself the fire of a whole company of Nizams. The two officers and four of the Cossacks fell to the ground mortally wounded; the two others were slightly wounded; General Skobeieff alone, for whom all the bullets had been intended, received not the least scratch! Almost directly after, as we have mentioned above, a strong reconnaissance of the Turks advanced; but calling to him the first line of his troops, Skobeieff threw himself upon them, and speedily drove them back. Unfortunately he allowed himself to be carried too far, and did not stop until he had arrived at a spot completely commanded by the Turkish positions. All his troops had followed him, and it was impossible to wait under the downward fire of the enemy without replying to it until the signal for the general attack at three o'clock. Accordingly, trusting to the maxim that in war it is better to commence an action too soon than too late, Skobeieff took the responsibility upon himself of ordering his troops to the assault.

He had before him a small work which was only

armed with two guns; to his left the much more important square redoubt; on his right a fortified camp; on his extreme right, near Plevna, another redoubt, and the great southern circular redoubt. All these works were connected with each other by trenches. After having dislodged the Turkish tirailleurs from the woods situated at the foot of the redoubts, he determined that Dobrovolsky should first of all attack and carry the small redoubt, and then, after its capture, the troops being able to shelter themselves conveniently, the artillery by a furious cannonade should prepare for the attack of the redoubt on the left, to the assault of which Skobelev himself would lead the main body of his forces.

At noon the Russians attacked the small redoubt, slaughtered the garrison, and seized the two guns which were posted there. The struggle for the position, however, was severe, as the Turks poured out in shoals from the larger redoubt, and fiercely contested the ground. The losses of the two battalions of chasseurs which accomplished the exploit were enormous, amongst those who were mortally wounded being the brave Dobrovolsky, who had distinguished himself some days previously at Lovatz. He appeared to have had a presentiment that his death was approaching. Two or three days before his untimely end the officer of the Staff had received from him an envelope containing his will; and the day before the battle, when admiring his horses and carriage, he observed—"Thank God, I have obtained good horses and a strong carriage; they will at least be able to carry my body back to Russia after to-morrow." When the eight chasseurs who acted as his orderlies carried their leader from the field of battle, General Dobrovolsky, meeting the artist Serge Verestchaguine, implored him to forward through Skobelev to his Highness the Grand-duke his earnest desire that the eight brave men in question should be decorated with the Cross of St. George—a last generous wish which was granted by his Imperial Highness.

After the capture of the lunette, an attempt was made to advance towards the larger work; but the struggle for the lunette had been such that, if not really exhausted, the men absolutely required a brief respite. The attempt therefore failed; the troops fell back, and Skobelev's artillery then for three consecutive hours poured a storm

of shells and grape-shot into the Turkish redoubt.

With the reinforcements he had received from the 31st Division after the forenoon battle, Skobelev had now in hand the Souzdal, Vladimir, Revel, and Libau regiments, with four battalions of tirailleurs. When three o'clock arrived, the hour fixed by General Zotoff for the united assault, Skobelev sent forward his artillery again to the crest of the hill between Krisin and the double redoubt, from which he had been compelled to retire the guns after the terrible fight in the forenoon. While a couple of batteries kept the Krisin redoubt engaged, Skobelev directed his troops to concentrate their attention on the Sophia or double redoubt. A couple of battalions of tirailleurs were sent out as skirmishers, and they extended down the slope to the ravine which divided the hill, now in Russian possession, and the redoubt. Right at the back of the skirmishers came the Souzdal regiment in double line, and all the way down into the ravine, even under a hot fire, they maintained their formation admirably. At a close interval came the Vladimir regiment, also in line, supported by the Revel regiment in company columns, in which formation the Libau troops succeeded, leaving Skobelev with only two battalions of tirailleurs as reserves. This order of attack was perhaps the best that could have been adopted for the occasion, considering the scathing fire to which the whole of the troops were exposed, not only from the two redoubts named, but from the Turkish sharpshooters who lined the intrenchments and covered-way leading down into Plevna. After closing at the bottom of the ravine for the purpose of making the rush up to the glacis of the redoubt, the troops were subjected to a fierce and well-sustained fire from the Turks, and many a gallant fellow sunk to the earth to rise no more. Advance was the order given, and away went the troops with a cheer. Now the line was broken, and an individual struggle took place up the hill, the men firing as they went, and dodging behind every little scrap of cover by the way. Onwards they went, but under what a terrible hail of bullets from the defenders of the fort and the earth-works! The glacis of the redoubt sloped down gently towards the Russian position, and gave to Skobelev's men about 500 yards to traverse before reaching their enemy. The Nizams stationed behind the intrenchments had been supplied with

small tin boxes, which they placed within reach of their hand, and in which were 200 cartridges. Ordered not to spare the ammunition, they fired without cessation with a kind of frenzy, which increased at the sound of their own deadly fusillade. Through the driving mist it could be seen that the men of the first line halted and wavered; but up sprang the Vladimir regiment, and all again pressed forward. The glacis was all but reached, when, as if they had reserved a volley for such a critical moment, the Turks poured upon them discharge after discharge, which mowed the poor fellows down like chaff. Again they wavered; but now came up the Revel and Libau regiments with a cheer, hurrying on their comrades, by this time begrimed with powder and pouring with perspiration and condensed mist. Thus reinforced, the attacking columns sent forth a cheer and pushed forward. Hurrahs came from a thousand throats as they attained the glacis; but there they were received with such a storm of bullets that hundreds bit the dust. The ditch was filled with dead and wounded, and many of the living sprang down for shelter. Once more, for the third time, the troops wavered, as well they might under such a fearful reception, and there was a tendency to retire.

Just at that moment Skobelev, seeing by the critical state of his column that there was not a moment to lose, put himself at the head of his two battalions of reserves. Raising himself in his stirrups on his white Arab, he waved his sword, and called upon his "children" to follow him. The men gave a shout, which was heard by and inspired hope in the breasts of their faltering comrades, so near the goal of their hopes and energies. The tirailleurs descended the slope at the double, commenced the ascent of the hill towards the glacis with redoubled velocity, touched the troops in front, and carried them along *en masse*. A new spirit seemed to seize the hard-pressed men, and again they advanced with a cheer. Skobelev rallied the stragglers, overtook the wavering, and inspired them with his own courage. He got together the whole column, and led it on sword in hand. To the Vladimir and Souzdal regiments he shouted, "Soldiers, will the regiment fall back? Follow me! Band, to the front!" At these words of their young leader, who was the idol of his soldiers, the men dashed forward like a hurricane. The personal daring and courage

of General Skobelev was indeed the very soul of the attack. With his head uncovered, his cap having been carried away by a ball, his face black with powder, no longer able to speak through shouting "Forward!" his Cross of St. George half off, his white tunic torn by balls and covered with mud, he was pressing towards the thickest of the fray when a shell burst almost beneath his horse and killed it—this being the fifth killed under him since the commencement of the campaign. Horse and rider together rolled over into the trench of the redoubt, and it was feared that the daring young General had succumbed at last. Still bearing his charmed life, however, Skobelev picked himself up unhurt, though his sword was broken in two by a fragment of shrapnel. Waving the fragment of his sabre overhead, he encouraged the men still to press onward. The glacis was reached, the ditch was crossed, the parapet mounted, and almost amongst the first to jump down into the redoubt was Skobelev himself. Now ensued a hand-to-hand fight for a few minutes. The Muscovite handled his bayonet with alacrity; and though the Turks fought bravely, and resisted to the last, the Sophia redoubt, with three Turkish guns, was ultimately won; but 2000 gallant fellows had laid down their lives for it.

Turning now to the operations of the Russian centre, it will be remembered that the principal task there allotted to General Krylov was the capture of the great circular redoubt beyond Radisovo. This work, of a formidable character quite equal to the Grivica on the north or to the square double redoubt on the south-west of it, was situated at the curve of the sickle-like line formed by the Turkish works, and was flanked by a strong square fort. The Russians had taken the village of Radisovo, and planted their batteries on heights beyond it towards Plevna. On a knoll between the latter town and the heights held by the Russians rose the formidable circular redoubt.

Throughout the forenoon, the men between the village of Radisovo and the batteries on the heights had been lying close to the ground, burning with restless anxiety to know how it fared with their comrades more to the left, yet condemned, while under shell fire too, to inactivity. This, no doubt, was demanded by the exigencies of the occasion, but the depressing influence upon them of seeing, no great distance off, hundreds of

the 16th and 30th Divisions, to which they themselves belonged, coming limping over the ridge or carried upon stretchers, must have been great. Then, too, they had themselves lain there for three days, with the shells shrieking around. Of food they had had nothing warm since the 6th or 7th, and their uniforms were drenched with the rains of the previous night and the fogs of the day. What a wretched preparation for an effort which was expected to be supreme on the part of Russia's soldiery! Nevertheless there was no sign of present trepidation, and certainly the officers were only too eager that the signal should be given for the assault. At last the long looked for signal came, and between half-past three and four o'clock the battalions sprang to their feet as one man, the officers in front waved their swords, and at quick step, to the music not of fife or drum, but of the batteries right and left of them, they mounted the ridge. The moment the top was reached, and a faint view of the towering circular redoubt, which it was their object to wrest from the enemy, was obtained, a cheer burst from the men, and they commenced the descent into the valley below. Already the Turks from their intrenchments, and from the redoubt itself, had opened a fierce musketry fire upon the advancing foe; but the progress of the Russians, begun at the double and now accelerated into a sharp nervous run, was not to be stayed, and although somewhat broken in formation, they swept down the hill with the ever-increasing velocity of an avalanche, while a perfect storm of shells and bullets came from the redoubt. There was a road between the hill down which the Russian troops had run and the glacis of the redoubt; and towards this road the assailants converged, and gradually closed on each other in fairly good lines. A detachment was now sent out to take ground to the right on the east side of the glacis, and this they did in admirable order, seeking shelter in some maize fields. To the left there was a wide, deep ditch, and there the left flank took shelter for a few minutes. Having developed this movement, the Russians had thus enveloped the redoubt hill on two flanks. A line of skirmishers was sent forward with supporters in rear of them, leaving the reserves at the head of the ditch or trench referred to. Up to this moment not a shot had been fired by the Russians, though they themselves were exposed to a torrent of bullets, and many a gallant fellow sunk to the earth, or was

thrown back amongst the Indian corn. But now, as the skirmishers commenced the ascent of the slope up to the redoubt, they opened upon the Turks in the flanking works and upon the parapets. Up went the reserves, steadily at first, and then in wavering lines, as score after score of them were mowed down. Finally it came to a rush. Officers encouraged the men, who responded; but the depression was evident. The Turkish fire was terrible. Through the misty gloom the flashing of rifles was like a continuous sheet of flame, while the rattling sound of the fusillade became awful in its intensity. The front line of Russians evidently hesitated; many fell to rise no more; others faltered and slowly returned, their faces still to the redoubt. Reinforcements then came down the Radisovo slope, pressed onward, and gave new courage to the decimated ranks of the leaders; another rush was made; they were getting closer and closer to the enemy; the broken line attained the glacis, and the redoubt seemed almost as good as taken. Just at this instant, however, Turkish reinforcements appeared on the scene. A road, corresponding on the Plevna side with that in which the Russians had re-formed in going down the hill from Radisovo, ran up a gentle slope to the town of Plevna. It was on this hillside road that the Turkish reinforcements appeared, marching up in columns of fours. Immediately on perceiving them the Russian officers halted their right flank, and the men lying down in the maize commenced to fire on the reinforcements, who, standing, delivered their fire upon the Russians. The moment was one of the intensest anxiety; but, alas for the success of the assault, the Turks could not be beaten back, and swinging round a little in rear of the work they got into the redoubt, followed in ten minutes afterwards by a still stronger detachment. Still the fire upon the redoubt continued, and time after time the Russian line was formed in a hurried manner and driven against it, but without making more headway than the base of the glacis; and at five o'clock, leaving the whole hillside strewn with dead, the attacking columns were compelled to retire.

Proceeding further north for the purpose of describing the operations on the Russian right, we may observe that the effect of the fog was especially unfortunate in this direction; for although it was here that the only substantial success of the attacking force was achieved, the great sacrifice of

life was doubled by a second assault being rendered necessary, owing to one column of the assailants getting lost in the mist, while, partly from the same cause, the combined action of another was greatly retarded. The attack on the Grivica redoubt was nevertheless a very brilliant affair, and reflected as much credit on the Roumanian as upon the Russian soldiery, for it proved once for all that the former could fight with a bravery not excelled by the most courageous Muscovite. This part of the battle was witnessed personally by General Krudener, commander of the 9th Corps, and the allied force was placed under the command of General Schilder-Schuldner, who led the assault of the left wing in the storming of Nikopol. The troops placed at the disposal of Schilder-Schuldner were the 2nd and 4th Divisions of the Roumanians and four battalions of the Archangel regiment, belonging to the 5th Russian Division—consisting in all of about 12,000 men. These troops were divided into three columns of attack, the first under General Rodionow, consisting of part of the 5th Russian Division, the 16th Division of Dorobantzi, and a battalion of the 8th Roumanian Division of the line. The two other columns were composed chiefly of Roumanian troops, and General Cernat, the Roumanian Minister of War, commanded them in person. A fourth column, made up of troops of the 3rd Roumanian Division, was to effect a diversion on Bukova Tabia. It behaved bravely throughout, and lost many men. In the thick mist which prevailed one of the Roumanian columns, under General Grammont, lost its way and was of no use whatever in the fight; while by some wretched mismanagement General Rodionow's arrived at the redoubt two hours and a half after the time fixed; the third alone was able to attack at three o'clock, according to the order of battle previously arranged. This column, which had under the circumstances to bear the whole brunt of the attack, was composed of two battalions of the 5th Russian Division of the line, the 3rd battalion of Roumanian chasseurs, and the 14th regiment of Dorobantzi.

The battalions of the line were the first to descend from the height in order to ascend the opposite slope, while a cloud of skirmishers extended, inclosing the redoubt on nearly two-thirds of its exposed sides, and opened fire to begin with on a small redoubt or out-flanking work im-

mediately to the south-east of the great work, and on the flanking intrenchments. In order to facilitate the storming of the redoubt, the skirmishers carried scaling ladders and gabions; and they advanced to their work with a coolness and intrepidity beyond all praise, covered by a strong cannonade from the Roumanian batteries on the crest of the ridge further east, from two Russian batteries just above Grivica, and from two siege guns still left in position in the centre heavy battery. Supported by a second line in company columns, which consisted mainly of Roumanian militia, the skirmishers advanced, firing rapidly as they went. Attaining the small outwork, they planted their scaling ladders, and in a few seconds had taken possession of this important post. When they emerged on this side from the cover which had been temporarily afforded them from the cannonade and fusillade of the Turks in the great redoubt, they were met with a tremendous fire, first from the great redoubt, secondly from the connecting redoubt, immediately to the left, and thirdly from the intrenched camp in a direct line westwards.

To make matters worse, the column found itself raked diagonally by a severe fire from a trench, of the existence of which they now for the first time became aware, and from which it was first of all necessary to dislodge the Turks before proceeding further to the redoubt. It was a critical moment, and it was hardly surprising that the ranks taken thus unexpectedly by a cross fire should waver. The Russian part of the column was the first to falter; the men fell rapidly, and in a few minutes they began to retire to the cover of the nearest knoll. The Roumanians, on the right, held on for a time; but their supports not appearing, they, too, wavered and were falling back, when the Dorobantzi or Roumanian militia regiment opportunely arrived. Rallying the troops, who by this time had become somewhat confused, a united effort was made and the trench was carried, but only after four desperate assaults.

Encouraged by their success thus far, General Cernat's column resumed its march forward. What was their astonishment, on arriving at the summit of the hill where they expected to find the redoubt, to see that they were still separated from it by a ravine 600 yards wide! Nothing is more deceiving than a country intersected by short hollows, and nothing could be more

likely to demoralize even the steadiest troops than so disagreeable a surprise. The trench was more than they had bargained for; but that once taken, it was thought the way to the redoubt would then be tolerably straightforward; for neither the commander of the 4th Division, General Cernat, nor the Staff had suspected the presence of this fatal ravine.

The Roumanians, however, were not shaken. The signal was given, and they dashed forward. They were received by a terrible fusillade, but although decimated, they still advanced; the ground was slippery under the soldiers' feet through the rain, which was still falling and drenching them, and it was necessary to use their bayonets to enable them to climb up the side of the ravine. Officers fell fast at this point, shot by the Turkish riflemen, who recognized their uniforms; at last, after some minutes, the Roumanians reached the redoubt. The first who attained the crest of the parapet was the infantry captain Valter Marucinians, who was killed as he mounted a fascine, and was shouting "Forward" to his men. In spite of prodigious efforts, however, the assailants were in the end obliged to fall back. Grammont's column was lost; some inexplicable delay retarded Rodionow, who was not to be seen; and this heroic column left to itself was far too weak. The retreat was not accomplished without danger—two battalions of Nizams coming out from two sides of the redoubt almost entirely surrounded one battalion of Dorobantzi. The standard of this battalion being on the point of being captured, it was torn up and distributed in small pieces, which were brought to the Colonel after the battle.

The Emperor, from his observatory, anxiously followed, as far as the state of the atmosphere would allow, the different incidents of this attack. Saddened at the ill success of the Roumanians, he set out towards Radisovo, where he arrived just in time to witness Kryloff's defeat. There were tears in his eyes when he saw his brave soldiers, decimated by the grapeshot, waver, stop, then fall back once again under the defenders' fire, and finally fly in disorder in every direction. His officers were scarcely able to induce him to leave the mournful spot, but they did at last succeed in getting him, in a greatly dejected state, to set off for the head-quarters at Poradim. It was only on the morning of the next day, at daybreak, that he

learnt through one of his aide-de-camps that the Grivica redoubt had been conquered two hours after the desperate but unsuccessful attack which he had witnessed.

Rodionow's brigade, after having for a long time skirmished in the fog, finally got into the proper route for the redoubt, and were making for it, when they met the Roumanians of the first column coming back. It was then arranged that the Russians should attack on the right and their allies on the left; and at half-past five the assault was recommenced.

Again the skirmishers went out in their converging line, followed by a battalion of Roumanian militia in their long grey coats and sheep-skin hats, not unlike the Scots Fusilier Guards. With a cheer the militia pressed onward; they passed the small redoubt and reached the glacis. These were followed at the double by two Russian battalions, and these by succeeding lines, right and left, of Roumanians and Russians. While gabions were being thrown into the ditch behind the glacis, the Turks poured out an intense fire; but the impetuous soldiery were not to be denied this time, and the superior slope was attained. Here a hand to hand fight commenced—the artillery ceased, and the best men won. The Turkish gunners were bayoneted at their guns; onward came the supports with a rush; soldiers fired their rifles almost point blank in each other's faces, and after a struggle, which seemed to last an age, but was actually only a few minutes, the Turks—at least those of them who survived—escaped in the darkness, and the redoubt was in possession of the allied forces, together with four Turkish Krupp guns and a standard, the capture being signalized by a cheer which went ringing down through the mist, and proclaimed the only encouraging event after the terrible repulses of the day. Two battalions of Russians and two of Roumanians were at once ordered up to occupy the fort won at the cost of at least 3000 men.

The night of the 11th under the walls of Plevna was full of dreary horror. A fine icy rain kept falling on the wounded, who could be heard calling from all parts during the night between the Turkish and Russian lines. But few slept amongst the soldiers of the Czar; all of them did not know of the capture of the Grivica redoubt, but they all knew what enormous losses had been experienced. Some regiments were reduced to the

strength of a battalion, some battalions to that of a company, and some companies ceased to exist altogether; there were none who had not to lament the loss of several comrades. Every face was gloomy and dejected at the thought of so much bloodshed—such butchery for so small a result; while the distant thunder of the Turkish cannonade, breaking out now and then, seemed to mock the unfortunate army which had just made such useless sacrifices both in men and courage. They pondered over the thought that there were between 12,000 and 13,000 men *hors de combat* in the Russian army and 3000 in the Roumanian; 16,000 men laid low beneath the walls of Plevna in one day. The bravest heart felt not merely sorrow, but discouragement, while a strong current of feeling prevailed in the army which had submitted to such purposeless slaughter. Most of the troops were now aware by bitter experience of the utter hopelessness of the task they had been sent to perform; and as they called to mind the thousands of their comrades of the morning now lying either dead or dying on the field, there were instinctive and not always suppressed murmurs against those who had ordered such a useless and sanguinary assault.

The dawn of the 12th brought with it a galling surprise to the valorous conquerors of the Grivica redoubt. During the night the Turks had on several different occasions approached shouting "Allah," as if they were going to make an assault and endeavour to retake Kerim Tabia; but they did not attack, contenting themselves with maintaining an incessant fire upon the work. The Russians thought their assailants were on some neighbouring position, from which they would be easily dislodged when day came. Most within it were firmly convinced that the redoubt they had just captured was the dominant position of Plevna, and that the surrender of the town would be a question of only a few hours.

This impression, indeed, was so cheering as to help them to forget the dreadful events which had caused the loss of such an enormous number of their comrades. How cruelly were the Russians and Roumanians deceived when, with the first glimpses of dawn, they saw looming before them a second redoubt which, as we have related, the prudent Osman Pasha had caused to be constructed. Not 300 yards from Kerim Tabia it rose on a slope, the presence of

which no one could have guessed from the Russo-Roumanian camp, but which it was now seen commanded all the neighbouring positions, including the first redoubt. This second work was as large, strong, and formidably armed as the first; and the assault would have to be recommenced, for Kerim Tabia could not be made of service to the besiegers while this second redoubt was in Turkish possession.

It had been decided that, on account of the state of disorganization in which the army found itself after the 11th, there should be no fresh attack on the 12th; the defenders of the redoubt were therefore obliged to arrange themselves in the intrenchments in the least dangerous manner possible, under a continuous artillery and musketry fire, which rendered it impossible to work during the day at repairing the parapets and turning the pieces against the Turks. It seemed, indeed, as if, to the Russians, the possession of the redoubt would be perfectly useless: for the Turks, posted within about 300 yards, fired indiscriminately upon everything which showed itself above the parapet. Human nature can seemingly become used to anything, and the incessant rain of Turkish bullets was presently regarded with complaisance. With grim humour the familiar old device for "drawing" fire was occasionally adopted, and the usual amusement was found, as a cloak mounted on a stick and exposed above the parapet was torn to shreds by the perfect volley it evoked.

The 12th was also destined to be a decidedly unfortunate day in other respects for the Russians. After the fatal surprise consequent upon the discovery of the second Grivica redoubt, they had the misfortune—indeed it might be said they committed the blunder—of allowing the two important redoubts captured by Skobelev to be retaken. Prince Charles and the Grand-duke Nicholas directed their attention only to the operations opposite Grivica, where they had passed the night, without a tent, simply wrapped in their great-coats in the icy rain; what passed at any other points seemed to them of little importance, Skobelev being thus absolutely left to take care of himself. He had plenty to occupy him in the Turkish lines, for a concentrated fire had been opened upon the position from the Krisin redoubt, from the heights of Plizitza, from the westernmost intrenched camp, from the houses in the town of Plevna itself, from

the wood to the north-west of the redoubt, and from the Plevna redoubt. Skobelev was consequently surrounded on rather more than three sides by shell fire, while the Turkish infantry with their long range rifles kept pouring in all day a deluge of bullets. To meet this concentrated fire Skobelev had taken into the redoubt four field guns, while the batteries on the Tuenica ridge, east of the Lovatz road, helped to divert attention by opening upon the Krisin redoubt. In the redoubt the Russians fought with desperate bravery, beating back with stubborn heroism the repeated assaults of the Turkish columns, and holding with the tenacity of the bull-dog their hard-won position, though hundreds of them were shot down in the effort. Not a moment's breathing time was given them, even to get a sip of cold water. Hotter and hotter grew the fire; in the redoubt and flanking trenches the men were falling in scores, while the hill to the south—that from which Skobelev stormed the redoubt, and by which any reinforcements might have reached him—was raked both with shell and bullet fire.

The Turks had commenced with an attack at five o'clock in the morning, and they made five assaults on the redoubt during the day. Skobelev's troops, who adored their leader, had sworn to die to the last man rather than retire, and their defence was heroic: 5000 of their number were stricken down during the five fearful onslaughts of the Turks, but they still clung to the positions they had won at such tremendous cost. Out of forty guns in battery, they had thirty-four dismounted, a fact which gives some idea of the prodigious shower of projectiles hurled against them.

Skobelev, in the meantime, was everywhere. He visited the redoubts three or four times during the day, himself helping to haul up the artillery to the positions, encouraging his troops, and promising them reinforcements. The soldiers invariably responded with shouts of enthusiasm, and went on fighting with renewed fury.

But reinforcements did not arrive, and Skobelev's corps was diminishing with frightful rapidity in the superhuman struggle. One battalion of chasseurs was reduced to 160 men; some entire companies had disappeared; the ranks were filled up by chance, and they fought confusedly, for there were no officers left.

Early in the afternoon a shell struck a caisson in the redoubt, and blew it up, killing General

Korapatkin, Skobelev's chief of the Staff; and here it may be remarked that every member of Skobelev's staff was either killed or wounded during these two days. It soon became evident that the redoubt and outflanking trenches could not possibly be held without reinforcements, and these were urgently requested. Bravely the Russians fought against tremendous odds in the meantime, for from under the sheltered covered way from Plevna away down in the gorge there streamed up battalion after battalion of Turks. The woods and vineyards to the left, on the north-east of Krisin, swarmed with Moslem sharpshooters, who, themselves hidden, picked off the devoted defenders of the redoubt; and sweeping along the ridge which connected the redoubt with Plevna came a withering fire that carried off scores of Russians in the trenches. Still no reinforcements were forthcoming, and the decimated garrison was worn out. At five o'clock General Zotoff sent a regiment of the 31st Division, which the day before had lost two-thirds of its men at Radisovo in the attack on the Plevna redoubt; but they only reached the vine-clad hill south of the Sophia redoubt, when they were met by the troops evacuating the position, which could no longer be maintained.

Convinced from the want of movement among the Russians at the centre and at Grivica, that they had no attack to dread on that side, the Turks had, at about the same hour as the reinforcements were despatched, concentrated immense masses of men against Skobelev. These troops left Plevna by the Sophia road, went through some thick woods situated in front of the redoubts, and at five o'clock dashed forward to the assault of the great redoubt held by the Russians, with trumpeters in the front, preceded by several regiments of regular cavalry, and a number of armed Mussulman inhabitants of Plevna and its environs. "There was," said one of the officers present at the action, "a regular swarm; the plain and hills were black with them; the more there were killed, the more seemed to come up." Their first lines were literally destroyed. The Russians fought like lions, and were killed without having retreated a single foot. Very soon the great redoubt was filled with heaps of corpses which were piled one above another, and finally were used as intrenchments by the survivors!

Skobelev had quitted the great redoubt an hour before. Suddenly an orderly brought the news

that the Turks were once more attacking, and this time in greater force than ever. He went forward to verify the correctness of the information, and was met by a crowd of fugitives, exhausted by forty-eight hours' fighting, worn out with fatigue, and dying of hunger and thirst, but who had even now been forced out only at the bayonet's point from their hardly-won position. "It was at this moment," said a correspondent of the *Daily News*, "I met General Skobelev the first time that day. He was in a fearful state of excitement and fury. His uniform was covered with mud and filth; his sword broken; his Cross of St. George twisted round on his shoulder; his face black with powder and smoke; his eyes haggard and bloodshot, and his voice quite gone. He spoke in a hoarse whisper. I never before saw such a picture of battle as he presented. I saw him again in his tent at night. He was quite calm and collected. He said, 'I have done my best; I could do no more. My detachment is half destroyed; my regiments do not exist; I have no officers left; they sent me no reinforcements, and I have lost three guns.' They were three of the four guns which he placed in the redoubt upon taking it, only one of which his retreating troops had been able to carry off. 'Why did they refuse you reinforcements?' I asked: 'who was to blame?' 'I blame nobody,' he replied; 'it is the will of God.'"

At six o'clock in the evening Skobelev was at last able to rally the remains of his corps near Krisin, and to intrench them, together with the reinforcements sent, when too late, to his aid, on the hill overlooking the redoubt which he had taken and occupied on the 10th. He had lost three guns, which had to be left in the redoubt; and 8000 of his 15,000 men—a carnage rarely witnessed even during the wars of the French Empire. All his troops had been engaged several times, and only the fascinating influence he possessed over his men had rendered it possible for the ranks to be re-formed, and the resistance continued, under so frightful a fire and in the midst of such horrible butchery.

That a man, usually credited with such impetuosity, should at the trying moment of his repulse have forbore to impute blame to any one, speaks loudly for his self-restraint. We have already referred to the fact that in several parts of the line less than half the army engaged in the

attack—the remainder being in reserve. The time immediately succeeding a repulse is of course a most critical one for a defeated corps; and had there been good reason to apprehend that the Turks would follow up their success by a sortie, the Russian Commander-in-chief might well have been chary about sparing his reserves. Moreover, it may be urged that he was unaware that Osman Pasha had withdrawn many of his troops from other parts to concentrate them upon the unfortunate Skobelev. But even admitting all this, there is still a heavy indictment against the other Russian commanders for leaving Skobelev to his fate. It proved the grossest incompetence in the Russian Staff, that they should have been at all slow to perceive the vital importance of the south and south-western defences of Plevna, and the extreme urgency of insuring success in the attack there, even beyond that in other positions. If the Russian Staff had been capable of realizing this, they would also have known by this time that Skobelev was not the man to send urgently for reinforcements before they were required. But the probability seems that none of the Russian commanders except Skobelev himself had formed any adequate idea whatever of the seriousness of the task before them, and much less any judgment as to the points most essential to be successfully assailed, if the scheme of storming an almost impregnable-fortified place was to be attempted at all.

The awe-inspiring effect upon the mind of a little harmless thunder is somewhat curious; and it would seem that the Russians, after listening to the awful roar of their six days' bombardment, had come to the conclusion that the task of storming the well-battered earthworks would be little more than a parade. Instead of which, so far from the cannonade having materially lightened the work, the assault might almost as well have been made on the first day of the bombardment. Very little harm had been done to the really splendidly-constructed works of Osman Pasha, and the trenches around them were as crammed with determined and well-provided men on the 11th as on the 6th September. If anything, the Turks were much better prepared; for an assault on the 6th would have been more of a surprise to them than on the day chosen. The heavy bombardment gave Osman Pasha to understand what was impending, and with the utmost coolness the fullest preparations were carried out; the redoubts were

manned, the trenches everywhere filled with troops, to whom double allowances of cartridges and rations were served, while the reserves were skilfully disposed of in the best positions for assisting the defence wherever it might prove weakest. In our biographical notice of the Turkish general we have already pointed out the characteristics by which he became revered and blindly trusted by an army enthusiastic, fearless, and devoted. On the 11th he gathered from numerous indications that the decisive day had arrived, and took up a position in which, so far as the atmosphere allowed, every part of the struggle was under his eyes, while the most ample arrangements had been made for his being instantly informed how the battle was proceeding on every hand.

We will take the case of one of the highest Russian commanders to illustrate how things were managed on the other side. General Zotoff, formerly commanding the 4th Corps, was actually in charge of the whole centre and left attack, comprising his own and the 9th Corps, with detachments; some five divisions of infantry in all, with nearly 250 guns. About 11.30 he placed himself for the day. The points of attack were settled beforehand, viz.—The great redoubt on the south side of Plevna and the batteries supporting it, and to give the hand as much as possible to Skobelev and Imeretinsky, coming on from the other side of the ravine against the four redoubts on the Sophia road. A more important part could not be. An English general, in these circumstances, would have first personally supervised the disposition of his troops to the minutest particular, and would then have taken post himself where he could watch and control every fluctuation of the fight. An active Staff, all eyes and ears, would have supplemented his efforts. But Zotoff placed himself where he could see nothing. Two ravines and two high ridges intervened between him and the points assailed; and his Staff appeared equally apathetic, the prevailing rule amongst them being carried out even on this awfully momentous day—namely, to pass on their own work to the next junior, who in turn passed it on in the same way, and thus ruined everything. Amongst this model Staff there was any amount of epaulettes and aiguillettes, of cigarettes and flasks going about. But of keen, active, incessant supervision of the fight there was not a sign.

It was indifference and carelessness such as this

which allowed Skobelev to be driven out from his hard-won success. He was within 300 yards of the town; his triumph had caused the first panic known in Plevna since Osman Pasha's arrival there, and well supported, as he certainly could have been, the Russians might have scored a victory to some extent commensurate with their lavish expenditure of blood. The disastrous defeat they met with instead was a scourging which the folly of their tactics only too richly merited.

On the 13th, by tacit consent, hostilities ceased on both sides, for both adversaries equally needed repose. The tremendous efforts made by the Russians had ended only in a disaster; they had secured the possession of *one* Turkish redoubt at a cost of nearly 20,000 men, and when captured it was found to be useless. Such, alas! was the fête celebrated in honour of their sovereign. Only sad, dejected, weary faces, stupefied, so to speak, by this murderous, incessant, unsuccessful fighting which had lasted a week, were to be seen in the Russian camp.

The frightful spectacle the army had constantly before it was well calculated to strike discouragement into the ranks. From the 7th to the 14th September there passed by in ambulances about 10,000 wounded soldiers, while an equal number lay dying and dead on the scene of the conflict. Many of these might have been saved but for the difficulty there was of making any satisfactory arrangement with Osman Pasha for the collection of the wounded and burial of the dead. The Turkish general, for military reasons, declined to allow the Russians to approach his works to carry away their dead, but offered to inter them himself—a proposal which General Zotoff rejected. Several thousand corpses remained, therefore, without burial between the two lines, and there decomposed, spreading an insupportable odour, which caused much disease amongst both Turks and Russians; and it was not until the growth of the new long grass many weeks afterwards that the ghastly sights were hidden from view.

According to the most reliable calculations, and judging from the number of wounded sent towards Sophia and Philippopolis, as well as to Adrianople and Constantinople, the number of Turks placed *hors de combat* by the several days' fighting may be safely placed at from 8000 to 10,000. The number of dead was greatest in

Kerim Tabia, where the Russo-Roumanian columns killed the garrison to the last man in the trenches of the redoubt; amongst them was found the general of brigade Arab Ahmet Pasha, hit by two balls; the general of division Hassan Pasha and the general of brigade Rifaat Pasha were both slightly wounded.

The Russo-Roumanian army retained the positions it had occupied at the close of the 12th; their batteries not being moved back, but remaining within a short distance of the Turkish redoubts. Care was taken to protect them, trenches for tirailleurs were dug on all sides, a strong redoubt was erected above Radisovo, and the cannonade was kept up with greater fury than ever; the besiegers had 320 pieces in line, but the Turks only replied feebly. Osman Pasha, who had just spent a tremendous amount of ammunition, began to feel anxious as to the operations of the Russian cavalry, and ordered what ammunition remained to be used carefully. At six o'clock in the evening of the 14th, however, the Grivica redoubt was furiously bombarded, and three hours afterwards, when night came on, a few tabors of Turks, issuing from the second redoubt, attempted to surprise the Roumanians who were holding the first; but the latter resisted, and allowed time for the Russian reserves to come up, and the assailants were finally repulsed.

During the 15th, the 16th, and the 17th the bombardment continued. The Russian artillery in replying set fire several times to Plevna, while considerable damage was also evidently caused to the second redoubt. The Roumanians, having learnt from the preceding attack what frightful losses were inflicted when men were exposed, during the attack, to the fire of an enemy's work, commenced, with admirable spirit, digging parallels against the second redoubt. On the 18th, however, as that work gave no more signs of life, Prince Charles ordered the Roumanian troops to make an offensive reconnaissance with the object of ascertaining what forces the enemy had concentrated there, and to make an attack in case those forces were not too numerous.

At half past one in the afternoon a battalion of the 1st infantry regiment of the line advanced in skirmishing order towards the redoubt, having a battalion of the 15th, and one of the 9th regiment of Dorobantzi as an attacking column, and a battalion of the 7th infantry in reserve; but the Turks

had kept well under cover, and although they had sufficient patience to keep silence, they were present in force. They opened fire upon the Roumanians, and at the approach of the attacking columns unmasked their artillery, which commenced to thunder forth, supported by a brisk fire from the infantry, who were sheltered in the trenches and the redoubts. The two battalions of the attacking column twice rushed to the assault, hoping by courage and dash to carry it in spite of their comparatively small numbers. They reached as far as the ditches of the redoubt, ready to throw down gabions and ladders and to scale the parapet, when there ensued a sharp hand-to-hand contest. The attack lasted more than two hours, and in spite of its heroic efforts, the Roumanian column, weakened by the loss of the dead and wounded which had been left on the way, could not continue to oppose an enemy too numerous to allow of their gaining an entrance into the redoubt. Prince Charles, not wishing to expose fresh troops, ordered the third attack, which was going to be made with the reserve battalion, to be abandoned, so that at about five o'clock in the evening fighting ceased altogether, and the Roumanians returned to their intrenchments.

This attack cost them five officers and 123 soldiers killed, and fifteen officers and 274 men wounded. At the same time it afforded them an opportunity of giving a fresh proof of their spirit and indomitable energy. From this time the prejudices which had existed against them wholly disappeared, and the Russians freely acknowledged them as their equals in courage.

The attack against Plevna may be said to have ceased with this attempt. The idea dawned at last upon the Russian Staff that there might be some mistake in a *modus operandi* which consisted of merely sending wave after wave of infantry down one slope and up another, in swarms, decimated by a rolling fire from Peabody and Winchester rifles for 1500 yards, to be at last withered and scorched to death at close range without even the possibility of success. They condescended therefore to adopt the less brilliant tactics of capturing Osman Pasha and his army by the stoppage of his supplies of provisions and ammunition, and immediately undertook the first operations of an investment, the details and results of which will be described in our next chapter.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Critical Position of the Russians after the third repulse before Plevna—Brightening Prospects of the Turks—A General Surprise to Europe—Russian Opinion on the Situation—Osman Pasha's Views as to his Position—Chieket Pasha appears on the Scene—General Kryloff sent to him for the re-equipping of Plevna—Chieket's Strength—A very welcome Procession enters Plevna—Scheme for supplying Osman Pasha with Provisions at regular Intervals—Breaking up of the weather in Bulgaria—Dangers from want of Sanitary Precautions—The Question of a Winter Campaign—Steps necessary to be taken when it was resolved on—Change of Tactics—Summoning of General Todleben and re-arrangement of the High Commands—Biographical notices of Generals Todleben, Skobelev, and Gourko—Improvement of the means of Transport—Fresh Courage inspired by the new arrangements, and by tidings of Russian Successes in Asia—Arrival of the Imperial Guard—Strength of the Army now investing Plevna—General Gourko appointed to the command of the Imperial Guard—He starts on his Mission to clear the Sophia road—Finds Gorny-Dubnik strongly fortified by Chieket Pasha—Relative Strength of the Forces of Gourko and Ahmed Hifzi Pasha—Dispositions of General Gourko for an Attack—Heavy Bombardment of Gorny-Dubnik—Capture of a Redoubt by the Grenadiers of the Guard—Premature Advance of the other Russian Columns—Deadly effectiveness of the Turkish Fire—Immense Losses of the Assaultants—Bad news from Telis adds to the Russian Misfortunes—Serious Losses of Colonel Tchelistchew's Column in the Attack upon Telis—Dangers of Gourko's Force by the Telis repulse—Careful arrangements for a renewed and united Attack on Gorny-Dubnik—Gourko's intentions unfortunately thwarted a second time—Dismay of the General—The best made of the mistake—During advance of the men from the captured Redoubt—Preparations for Storming the Chief Turkish Redoubt in immense Force—Heroic attack by the Guard—Desperate resistance of the Turks—Capture of the Redoubt—Heavy Losses of Officers—Advance of General Gourko upon Telis—Incapacity of its Commander, Hakki Pasha—Telis severely Bombarded—The Pasha surrenders the Position after some mercenary stipulations—Revenge for Turkish Atrocities on the 21st—Large number of Prisoners captured.

THE period which immediately followed the third and most sanguinary repulse of her army before Plevna was the most critical through which Russia passed during the war. Her military prestige was considerably weakened, and the consequences of the blunder she had committed in entering upon a campaign with an insufficient army were bearing upon her in their full force. War had now been declared five months, and as yet, not only were no decisive results obtained, but a fearful sacrifice of life had been attended by several very humiliating failures. In Asia the Turks had passed from the defensive to the offensive, and had invaded the Erivan territory; in Europe they had just inflicted a third bloody defeat upon the invaders at Plevna; if they were less successful at Shipka and on the Lom, they had at least shown themselves so strong in both places as to have good reason to hope for success in fresh attacks; while the Russian armies, pent up in a narrow space between the Danube and the Balkans, and scarcely equal in number to the Turks opposed to them, were seriously endangered, having, as a way of retreat in case of a misfortune, only three pontoon bridges, which were frequently broken by storms.

Throughout Europe the surprise was extreme; for it had been imagined, by virtue of a simple arithmetical calculation, that a State which recruited its armies from only sixteen million Mus-

sulmans would be speedily crushed by an Empire which had eighty millions of inhabitants to draw upon. Moreover, after the rapid advance of the Russians towards Adrianople in July, it was considered scarcely possible that they should be checked, much less that a period of desperate and indecisive fighting with the Ottoman armies should supervene.

While, therefore, the Sultan had bestowed the title of Ghazi, or "victorious," upon Osman and Mukhtar, his two triumphant generals in Europe and Asia respectively, the Russian army found itself the object of adverse criticism in nearly the whole European press. To these wounds to their national self-love were added other causes of disenchantment, from which resulted a great feeling of discouragement, which no one attempted to conceal, and which existed in Russia as well as in the camps in Bulgaria and Armenia. The Bulgarian had been decidedly let down from the pedestal on which he had been placed in his character of martyr previous to the war; but if the suffering Bulgarian had been an illusion, it was now Russian blundering which had turned the illusion into a sad reality, and had given the Bulgarians a clear and tangible claim upon Russia to redress their wrongs. The general state of feeling throughout the Empire might fairly have been thus expressed: "We believed that the

Bulgarians were much more miserable than they really were, and we honestly determined to free them from their miseries. Perhaps it was foolish of us to attempt it; certainly it was foolish to attempt it without making greater preparations. When we said we were ready to make any sacrifices for this purpose we were perfectly sincere, but we did not clearly realize what these words meant. Now we perceive that the efforts and sacrifices we are making could have been better made at home, but since we have begun the work we must finish it. Were it a matter merely of material interests, we would gladly withdraw from the enterprise; but having compromised the Bulgarians, we cannot leave them to the tender mercies of the Turks."

The fact that orders had been given for the mobilisation and despatch of the Imperial Guard, together with other corps of the finest Russian troops, was well known to the Turkish Generals and Military Council at Constantinople. The orders having been given immediately after Krudener's defeat on the 30th July, the various regiments were now rapidly approaching the theatre of war in Bulgaria, and their aid would facilitate the carrying out of whatever plans the Russians might now adopt for the reduction of Plevna. Under these circumstances, the opinion of most military men was that "Glazi" Osman would leave Plevna, which he had just rendered famous by three successive victories, and seek, either at Orkhanie or at Sophia, a new point of resistance, less distant from his base of operations. It was also the project of the famous Turkish General himself; but the suicidal influence of the Council of War at Constantinople, inspired at the time by Mahmoud-Damad, prevented its adoption.

On learning that an expedition was on the point of setting out from Constantinople for the Caucasus (which expedition, as we shall see in our chapters describing the Asiatic campaign, was a complete failure), Osman Pasha at once endeavoured to dissuade the Minister of War from the project; and advised him, on the contrary, to establish a large camp at Sophia, and concentrate on that point, not only all the troops which were then at his disposal at Constantinople, and which were very numerous, but also all the Nizams which formed the garrisons of the different neighbouring vilayets of the capital. If this arrangement had been carried out, Sophia would have become, not

only a depot for provisions, but it would have contained an army of 120,000 to 150,000 men, which, well commanded, would have rendered the investment of Plevna well nigh impossible. The sapient Military Council, however, were not in the humour to listen to advice, and Osman's counsel was disregarded.

For some time the dangers of investment not appearing very threatening, Osman Pasha believed he could maintain himself at Plevna; but when he fully comprehended that the Russian Guard and the grenadiers were actually arriving in order to reinforce the army which was besieging him, and that nothing was done to secure his communications, he again sent to Constantinople for authority to fall back on the Balkans. Imperious reasons demanded this retreat. There was not at Plevna, nor could there be obtained from the surrounding districts, anything like sufficient provisions to feed an army of 50,000 men during a long siege. On the other hand, nothing had yet been done to keep free the revictualling line from Plevna to Orkhanie. The authority which the Turkish General asked for was, however, refused; the Council only promising to effect his revictualling and the concentration of forces necessary to prevent his investment. From the moment of this decision, coinciding as it did with the arrival of the Russian reinforcements, the surrender of the most capable general and most valiant army Turkey possessed was simply a question of time.

There now comes upon the scene a Turkish officer whose participation in one of the most hideous crimes which have ever taken place, had given to him an infamous notoriety. Chefket Pasha had presided at the massacres which took place in Bulgaria in 1876, and which had been mainly instrumental in moving Europe to the uncontrollable indignation of which the present war was the ultimate result. His punishment had been loudly demanded on every hand, and in most unmistakable terms by the English Government especially. Chefket was indeed sentenced to death; but the sentence was graciously commuted by the Sultan to banishment—the real fact being that the exile of Chefket took the form of nominating him to a high command at Batoum. Against this the British ambassador indignantly protested, and after a time the appointment was cancelled.

It would seem, however, that by this time the

Turks either despaired of receiving any substantial assistance from England, and were therefore not particularly anxious to conciliate her further, or that they were no longer alarmed at the demonstrations of the British ambassador in the absence of any adjuncts to moral suasion in the shape of a British fleet or army. At all events, England having declared that she meant to give to the Ottoman Government neither material nor even moral aid, the Turks resolved no longer to deprive themselves of the services of a man who was one of their best officers, and Chefket was accordingly appointed to the command of an expedition to be despatched to the relief of Osman Pasha at Plevna. It is but the bare truth to say, that however unworthy in other respects, he certainly acquitted himself of the difficult task assigned him on this occasion with a success which considerably prolonged Osman Pasha's means of resistance. The prompt manner in which very large stores of provisions and munitions were collected by Chefket was one of the most expeditious and business-like matters carried out by the Turks during the war, and we shall see that no time was lost in transmitting them to their destination.

A corps of observation, composed of the greater part of the Russian cavalry present around Plevna, accompanied by some artillery and two brigades of Roumanian cavalry, under the command of General Kryloff, was despatched, about the middle of September, to scour the country beyond the Vid, and to hinder in every possible way the revictualling of Plevna.

General Kryloff proposed to operate principally on the Sophia-Plevna road—that being the principal line of communication. He intended to commence by operations on the west side of the village of Telis, in the belief that he was there more likely to meet and capture the revictualling convoys. On the 19th September his column arrived before the village of Gorny-Dubnik, where he was informed that several Turkish columns were taking him in flank by advancing from the north-west side of the village of Mahaleta, situated on the road from Plevna to Rahova. In order to verify this information, he sent some patrols to reconnoitre on that side; but on their return they unanimously declared that no Turks were to be seen. The Russians had in fact been imposed on by false reports which had been purposely circulated, for the Turks had the greatest interest in

drawing General Kryloff away to the north of Plevna, and in setting free the Sophia road. An immense convoy of provisions and ammunition, escorted by twenty battalions under the immediate command of Hifzi Pasha, had left Orkhanic on the 18th September, and was advancing towards Plevna by this route.

On the 20th Kryloff, persisting in his idea of watching the Sophia road, and refusing to allow himself to be again caught by the ruse of his adversaries, sent a large force to the south-west of Telis, with the object of reconnoitring all the country between the Isker and the Sophia road. Baron Stackelberg, the Commander of this force, discovered the Turkish convoy before Telis, but he had not time to ascertain its strength—harassed as he was by the cavalry of Hifzi Pasha, with which he had to sustain a somewhat severe struggle.

This discovery obliged General Kryloff to make sure, if possible, of the number of the enemy's forces; and accordingly, on the following day, another reconnoitring force was despatched, under Colonel Tontolmine. Engaging in a brisk fight with his adversaries, Tontolmine compelled the Turks to show their strength; and it was then seen that the position of Telis was fortified by means of trenches and batteries, and that there were altogether from 10,000 to 12,000 Turks, with two regiments of cavalry and six cannon.

On the 22nd September Ahmed Hifzi, continuing his forward march, advanced on Dolny-Dubnik—repulsing the numerous Russian scouts he found on the road. General Kryloff engaged in an artillery fight, which lasted until three o'clock in the afternoon, when he received a despatch stating that the Turkish infantry, in very considerable numbers, had just made a sortie from Plevna, and were advancing to attack him in the rear. Threatened thus with being taken between two fires, and considering his forces insufficient to engage the two Turkish armies with any chance of success, Kryloff fell back in a north-westerly direction; and the immense convoy, consisting of 1500 waggons, entered Plevna during the night.

On his return to Séméret-Terstenik, which he had chosen for his head-quarters, General Kryloff formed a detachment of scouts, whom he ordered to reconnoitre the country between the villages of Teherveny-Breg, Roubtsc, and Radomirec. This detachment commenced its march the same day, and about ten miles south-west of Telis,

they captured more than 1000 head of cattle, eighty horses, and a convoy of quinine and other medicines, and salt. They also destroyed the Panega bridge on the road to Radomirce, and again cut the telegraph from Sophia between Telis and Loukovitsa, which the Turks had succeeded in repairing.

On the 3rd October the Russian Commander established himself at Radomirce with the main body of his forces—thus cutting the road from Plevna to Sophia. On the 6th, however, the road was re-opened by the Turks, under Chefket Pasha, who was assisted by a sortie from Plevna, with the object of attacking the Russians in the rear, and thus placing them in a critical position.

Chefket Pasha had started from Orkhanie in concert with Kiasim Pasha, and they escorted a similar convoy to that which had entered Plevna on the 22nd September. The bridges destroyed by the Russians, and which it was necessary to repair, the frightful weather—rain and snow, and the streams swollen and transformed into torrents—all tended to delay the march of the immense convoy, which nevertheless triumphantly arrived in Plevna on the 12th October.

Chefket Pasha's success was by no means creditable to the generalship of his antagonists. The Russian attack had reduced Osman Pasha to such straits, that the Russian Staff knew that, if they could only cut off the supplies he was receiving by the road from Sophia, Plevna would soon be theirs. Yet knowing this, and recognizing the necessity of sending a force to the rear of Plevna to intercept convoys, they omitted to send so much as a brigade of infantry in aid of their cavalry and artillery, which would probably have sufficed for the capture or destruction of the convoy. It is difficult to believe that, with a proper disposition of his troops, Kryloff could not have used the large force of cavalry and artillery intrusted to him to more substantial purpose, even in the absence of infantry. Of all military operations, the obstruction of a convoy is one of the simplest. It is no easy task for the general who has to guard and control the march of long lines of waggons to insure regularity and order in the columns intrusted to his care, even when moving beyond striking distance of his enemy. When that enemy comes within the range of small arms, or even of artillery, his difficulties are enormously enhanced. The wheel of a waggon broken by an

unlucky shell brings the vehicle to ruin, and converts it into a barricade across the road, which bars the retreat of the carriages in front of it, and the passage of reinforcements for the fighting troops from the rear. Kryloff, however, was an infantry man, and entirely unfamiliar with the successful handling of cavalry. That a second and equally ample convoy safely reached Plevna about twenty days after the first, and when the Grand-duke Nicholas had been well informed of Chefket's intentions, is a fact which can only be excused on the ground of the helpless prostration to which their last assaults upon Osman Pasha's positions had reduced the Russians.

Chefket and Kiasim remained with Osman Pasha until the 20th October, and arranged a plan by which they hoped the continuance of the re-victualling should be effected. It was agreed that every fortnight Chefket should bring a convoy by the road from Sophia to Plevna. Of all the roads made in Bulgaria by Midhat Pasha this was the best, being perfectly macadamised, and wide enough for two waggons to pass abreast. A line of telegraph also ran along the whole length of it. Its defence was organized in the following manner:—A *cordon* of cavalry was placed on either side, and sheltered in the intrenchments; afterwards, at distances varying from four to six miles—at Dolny-Dubnik, Gorny-Dubnik, Telis, Radomirce, Takovitsa, and other places—works were constructed, destined to serve as halting places, and occupied by a considerable garrison of infantry, cavalry, and artillery. The convoy would generally have from 500 to 1000 waggons. When the Russian cavalry attacked it, they would always find before it a certain force of infantry, the struggle with which would demand some time, and the convoy would turn this to account by passing on to the nearest halting station.

The plan showed a considerable degree of acuteness on the part of Chefket Pasha; and the halting stations—especially that of Gorny-Dubnik—were prepared with strength sufficient not only for the temporary refuge of convoys, but to enable Osman Pasha to make a substantial stand against the Russians in either of them, should it be deemed necessary for him to fall back gradually upon Orkhanie and Sophia. If the sanguine ideas of a constant series of convoys to be carried to Plevna with the same ease as the first and second were

not fully realized, one of the "halting stations" was at all events destined to cost the Russians the sacrifice of more than 3000 of their magnificent Imperial Guard before it was reduced.

If effectual measures were to be taken to complete the investment of Plevna, and really to stop its re-victualling, it soon became evident that the quicker this was accomplished the easier would be the task. The elements began to make war upon the invaders of Turkey, and about the beginning of October the Russian army had a foretaste of what a Bulgarian winter was. It snowed in the Balkans, and torrents of rain fell between the Balkans and the Danube. In a few days the country was changed into an immense bog, and it was largely due to this cause that the reinforcements which now arrived from Russia had before their eyes, immediately after passing the Danube, a spectacle calculated to give them the very gloomiest idea of the miseries which awaited them. The Russian engineers had constructed bridges of boats between Simitza and Sistova, by which men and war material were pouring into Bulgaria without cessation; but they had not taken the precaution to establish at the end of these bridges any well-metalled road, so that when the bad weather came on, frightful quagmires formed in the ground, which had been so tremendously worn by the thousands of men, horses, and conveyances of every description passing over it. Waggons were seen with as many as twenty horses yoked to them, trying to get them through these abysses; drivers shouted and swore in all the languages of the East, and the teams only sunk deeper and deeper into the mire without making any advance. Ammunition waggons with their axle-trees broken, remains of carriages and Bulgarian arabas scattered in frightful disorder along the river, spoke eloquently of the results effected too often by these efforts. It was a scene of hopeless wreck: fragments of shattered vehicles emerged from the black, semi-fluid mixture, and dead horses, which no one even tried to drag out, were lying half buried in the mud nearly everywhere. Everything that passed along the roads cut them up more and more, and all tended to create a scene of dirt and confusion beyond conception. Add to this continuous heavy rain, and the rapidly shortening days, and something of the difficulties of effective transport service may well be imagined.

If the Russians, unused as they were to such a climate, were to be spared its worst consequences, the utmost sanitary precautions were necessary; but these were chiefly conspicuous by their absence. Their neglect was liable at any time to produce an even worse evil than the loss of a great battle, and the Russians could not certainly plead inexperience of the consequences of such negligence. In 1829, when they were more successful than they had been so far in this campaign, the plague broke out in their ranks and struck them down by tens of thousands. The losses which they sustained in battle were small compared with those in the hospital; and by the time their victorious army reached Adrianople, it was so weak that it might have been destroyed by any vigorous attack. The one great lesson, indeed, taught by that war, was the imperative necessity of attending to the elementary laws of health. Hitherto the defiance of those rules did not seem to have produced any alarming consequences, but the time was now come when any day might bring a terrible change; and indeed this possibility was to a great extent realized by the fact that by the end of September, out of the 90,000 men encircling Plevna, there were nearly 20,000 soldiers ill. Nor was sickness by any means confined to the rank and file. Skobelev and Imere-tinsky were compelled to go to Bucharest to recruit their strength; Schachowskoi—in a worse state of health still—returned to Russia; and General Leontief, who had distinguished himself at Lovatz, died.

In the face of decidedly ill success, unexpected obstacles, and the approach of a most severely trying season, the question actually arose in the Russian councils as to the wisest course to pursue. There were only two things to choose between, and both were regarded with an equal amount of apprehension. The first was to continue the campaign throughout the winter; the second had historical tradition on its side. It was, to renounce the advantages gained at so costly a price, abandon Bulgaria, covering the retreat with the Guard which was just arriving. This course had always been pursued in preceding wars, for the Russians had never believed themselves able to pass the winter in Bulgaria without danger.

It needed, however, no very long consideration to decide the Czar's advisers as to whether the course thus sanctioned by thrice-repeated pre-

cedent should be again pursued. The situation now was different in many respects to that of half a century before. Then Turkey was still regarded as a great Empire, and Russia could without disgrace undertake two campaigns to beat her; but now, when Russia possessed such great resources, and Turkey, "the sick man," was so weakened, and when they had set out on the war with the idea that they were going to make a triumphal march to Constantinople, could they go back and confess that although they had had a clear loss of 60,000 men everything must be commenced again? How would the Russian people, already sufficiently discouraged, support such a crowning humiliation? To retire, even for a time, and set Osman Pasha free would, moreover, be to confess that they were unequal to the capture of a hastily-fortified town; and Russia would not only lose her influence over Slavonic nationalities beyond her own frontiers, but would probably find hopes of successful resistance dangerously encouraged in Central Asia. Therefore, whatever reasons prudence might suggest in favour of a retreat, national pride would not allow such a proposal to be entertained for an instant, and it was unanimously determined to continue the campaign, whatever the cost.

In view of this determination to adopt a course hitherto regarded as fraught with such imminent danger to the army, two things were felt to be absolutely necessary. The first was to insure that the men should not be uselessly sacrificed through the incompetency of their generals; and the second was to take means to insure the constant arrival of supplies—a task difficult at all times, and doubly so in winter—and the mitigation, as far as possible, of the rigour of the season.

There had been abundant occasion to inspire mistrust of their superior officers in the minds of the men who had been called upon to do the deadly work around Plevna. That there was no unity in the councils of the Grand-duke was only too well known. The Commander-in-chief took one view, the Chief of the Staff another, and thousands of lives were uselessly sacrificed to illustrate the incapacity of both.

There was something heroic in the bravery and devotedness of men who suffered themselves to be led a third time to the slaughter with the knowledge of such facts as these, but the necessity for a change in the Staff was now irresistibly apparent; and General Todleben, the hero of Sebas-

topol, was summoned from Russia and attached to Prince Charles' army as Chief of the Staff. This single appointment of itself, apart from the others to which we shall presently refer, was indicative of an entire change to be carried out in the plans and tactics of the Russians. Hitherto they seem to have had a positive disclaim for the scientific part of warfare. Even the crossing of the Danube formed no exception to the rule; for they were badly provided with pontoons, and thus days were wasted before the passage was made secure. A disaster far greater than the defeats at Plevna might have formed the first chapter of the campaign, if the Turkish defence had not been a miracle of negligence. The greatest of soldiers may fail to take necessary precautions; the First Napoleon was often guilty of that fault, and sometimes he narrowly escaped the natural consequences of his errors. But it would be difficult to name another commander who ever trusted so largely to the chapter of accidents as the Russian Grand-duke. It was one of the mysteries of the war that General Todleben was not on his Staff from the first, instead of being called in at the eleventh hour to repair the blunders of less skilled soldiers. Past campaigns, the physical features of Turkey, and the knowledge that her troops were effective behind intrenchments rather than in the open field, might have been expected to teach the Grand-duke that the campaign would be eminently an engineer's war. A great river had to be crossed in the face of a hostile army, several strong fortresses to be taken or masked, and places like Plevna captured, before the Turkish resistance could be broken. Nor could it be said, as regards Plevna, that the Grand-duke had been misled by the teachings of the Franco-German war. The Germans certainly did break the strength of France in some tremendous battles, but they could not have done so if she had been content to stand on the defensive; and when she did take advantage of her fortresses, the German methods of attack became models of caution. No attempt was made to take any of the forts at Metz or Paris by assault. Two great armies simply sat down before these places, fortified their own lines, and waited until it should please the authorities to surrender. The Allied Armies would doubtless have acted in the same way at Sebastopol if they could have invested the northern forts, and thus stopped all the supplies. The great experi-

ence of the former defender of Sebastopol, together with some of the usual devices of the military engineer, would probably have enabled the Russians, with comparatively trifling losses, to have measured the real strength of Osman Pasha's position, and to have adapted their tactics accordingly. They were apparently content to gain the needful knowledge by a series of hair-brained assaults, which involved the slaughter of about 40,000 men, and then had to resort to Todleben and to tactics and a little military science after all.

Although the appointment of General Todleben was the most important change made in the dispositions of the Russian Staff, several other re-arrangements took place at the same time, the general effect of which was to bring into greater prominence the men who had most honourably distinguished themselves up to this stage of the campaign, as will be seen from a few of the names. Prince Imeretinsky, the conqueror of Lovatz, was made Lieutenant-general, and assumed the functions of Chief of the Staff of the Army of the West. General Skobelev, the favourite of the army, the hero of the 11th and 12th September, was also made a Lieutenant-general, and placed at the head of the 16th Division of infantry; Zotoff was once more relegated to the command of the 4th Corps; Lieutenant-general Gourko, whose campaign beyond the Balkans still remained the most brilliant Lieutenant-general Kryloff was removed from the episode of the war, was appointed commander of all the cavalry of the Corps of the West, and subsequently of the Imperial Guard also, with Major-general Naglovskoi as chief of the Staff; command of the 4th Corps, and attached to the person of the Grand-duke Nicholas. Prince Schachowskoi was allowed to return to Russia, and was replaced in the command of the 11th Corps by Lieutenant-general Baron Dellingshausen.

To silence the recriminations excited by the favouritism which had formerly decided the distribution of commands and honours, a large number of promotions, appointments, and decorations were also showered upon those who had distinguished themselves in any way since the beginning of the war; and in order to stimulate the ardour of those in the subordinate grades, the conditions necessary to attain promotion—previously exceedingly hard in most cases—were modified by an important order of the day.

Of the officers we have enumerated, at least three appear to call for a little more than simply a passing mention. The first, General von Todleben, appointed Chief of the Staff of the Commander-in-chief of the allied forces before Plevna, and virtually the director of the operations against Osman Pasha, was born at Mittau on the 20th of May, 1818, and was therefore now in his sixtieth year. In 1835 he entered the engineer school in St. Petersburg, leaving it in 1838 with the commission of sub-lieutenant. In the early part of his service he was attached to the Army of the Caucasus, and distinguished himself at the sieges of several fortified places. During the Crimean war he, in the first instance, conducted the siege operations against Silistria, and afterwards became celebrated for his obstinate and skilful defence of Sebastopol. As a reward for his services on that occasion he was appointed General-adjutant to the Emperor Alexander II., and received the Order of St. George and a grant of money. In 1858 he was further given the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Andrew. In 1860 he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-general, and appointed director of the Engineer Department of the Ministry of War, which he held until called to the seat of war to conduct the siege operations against Plevna.

The second, General Skobelev, was the youngest officer of the rank of lieutenant-general in the Russian, or probably in any army, having been born in 1845. He received his first commission in 1863, and distinguished himself so frequently and so greatly in the campaigns in Central Asia, that by 1876 he had attained to the rank of major-general. His earliest exploit was a remarkable and daring undertaking, for which he afterwards received the Cross of St. George. Of the five columns which marched on Khiva only four arrived, and one, that of Markosoff, was obliged to turn back in the middle of the desert for want of water, after having incurred the most imminent danger of destruction from heat and thirst. General Kauffmann wished to ascertain whether it would have been possible for Markosoff to reach Khiva by that route, but the Turkomans whom he had just been fighting had all fled in that direction. To have explored the route with safety it would have been necessary to send a large column, which Kauffmann did not think the importance of the matter justified. The only other alternative was for a small party to make the attempt, at the risk of falling into the

hands of the exasperated Turkomans. This Colonel Skobelev volunteered to do. He took three friendly Turkomans with him, disguised himself in the costume of a Turkoman, and started on his perilous enterprise. He did not return for ten days, and everybody had given him up for lost, when he finally appeared at Khiva the day before Kauffmann's evacuation of the capital. He had managed to elude the Turkomans, and to reach the point where Markosoff had turned back; he explored the way, measured the depth of the wells and the amount of water they could supply, and returned safely, almost exhausted by his long ride.

His subsequent career was a very extraordinary and brilliant one. After fighting bravely as Colonel Skobelev, he was made General, intrusted with the command of the forces sent against Khokand, and afterwards was appointed Governor of Ferghana, the new name of Khokand, the country which he himself conquered and annexed, and which contained a population of about two millions of inhabitants.

On the evening before the passage of the Danube at Simniza, having been requested by the Grand-duke to call for volunteers from the division of Cossacks under his command to swim the river and reconnoitre the opposite bank, General Skobelev himself plunged into the water, at the head of a small party of ten men, and successfully accomplished the required work. Subsequently, as our narrative has already shown, wherever an enterprise of peculiar danger and difficulty was to be carried out, there Skobelev was to be found—foremost in the brilliant raid through the Balkans with Gourko, then capturing Lovatz, and afterwards doggedly pushing his way up to Plevna on what Osman Pasha evidently regarded as his most vital side.

No general in the Russian army knew better how to manage and humour his men—a gift by no means to be despised in time of war; and there was no enterprise in which they were not eager to follow him. He had an extraordinary predilection for white colours in battle. For example, he invariably rode a white horse; and a large flag, chiefly white, with the letters M. S. in the centre, always indicated his whereabouts to the enemy, among whom he was well known by the soubriquet of the "White Pasha," or the "White Devil." He was said to have adopted white colours, in spite of its rendering him so conspicuous, in honour of a deed of bravery much renowned in military circles

performed by his grandfather. This Colonel Skobelev commanded a regiment in an engagement that took place towards the close of the War of Liberation. A French battery planted in a defile had inflicted great loss on the Russian ranks, and the Colonel resolved to make the attempt to capture it. At the head of his regiment, and riding on a white horse, Skobelev led the charge. It was beaten back; eighteen times in succession the Colonel rallied his men, and endeavoured to lead them up to the guns, but the assailants were in each instance repulsed. The defenders of the battery, however, had good reason to remember the rider of the white horse. Napoleon visited the position in the course of the day, and admired the pluck and skill with which the Colonel gathered together the fragments of his regiment, and led them again into action. A young French officer had taken aim at the rider of the white horse, and was about to fire, when the Emperor called to him—"Don't shoot; that brave fellow deserves an Order, not a bullet."

General Gourko was a much older man than General Skobelev, having been born in 1828. In 1846 he was appointed a cornet in the hussar regiment of the Guard. Passing through the Staff School, he was, in 1852, promoted to the rank of captain, and served in that grade throughout the Crimean War in the Diebitsch regiment. In 1857 he was appointed commander of the Emperor's squadron, and also to a post in the Emperor's suite. In 1861 he became colonel, and commanded a regiment of hussars during the Polish campaign of 1863. Promoted to the rank of major-general in 1867, he commanded the regiment of mounted grenadiers of the Guard from that date until 1873, when he succeeded to the command of the 1st brigade of the 2nd Division of cavalry of the Guard. In 1876 he became a lieutenant-general, and by his present appointment he was placed in direct command of 24,000 infantry, 6000 cavalry, and eighty-four guns, all belonging to the Imperial Guard. This was not the entire strength of the Guard, many of whom were detailed for service in the immediate investment of Plevna; but it was the strength of the expeditionary force, together with 4000 other troops of various kinds, with which Gourko carried out the operations west of the Vid, which we shall presently have occasion to describe.

Besides changes in the chief command and in

the general *personnel* of the officers, it was, as we have observed, equally necessary to insure regularity of supplies, and to make arrangements such as would mitigate to some extent the rigour of the winter, now that the campaign was to be actively continued. Accordingly, immediately upon his arrival, General Todleben ordered a plan to be adopted which allowed of the Russians reaping all the advantages that could be hoped for from a winter campaign, with the least possible danger. This plan consisted in keeping on the defensive in the east and south, so as to be able to concentrate at those points into cantonments fixed upon and prepared beforehand; on the west to invest Plevna with the numerous reinforcements which were arriving, and to close in as nearly as possible upon it, sheltering the main body of the army in the surrounding villages. The advance posts would be, as before Metz in 1870, lodged in huts or tents constructed for the purpose, and the troops employed would be very frequently relieved by fresh ones, more comfortably quartered in the rear. The only troops which would thus be necessarily exposed, under unfavourable conditions, to the inclemency and severity of the winter, were those charged from time to time with occupying all the strategic points, and all the roads within a tolerably wide radius around Plevna, and with arresting the march of the Turkish armies which might attempt to raise the blockade of Osman Pasha. In order to execute this plan, and further to allay the apprehensions which the prospect of a winter campaign aroused, the Russian Government, which had previously appeared to wish to carry on the war with too much economy, now provided for it with a liberality and foresight which should have been displayed earlier.

Immense preparations were made. Barracks were erected wherever it was considered necessary; the movable hospitals were replaced by constructions of wood; depôts were formed along the roads, and enormous stores of corn and hay were accumulated in them; great quantities of fuel were also collected, and warm sheepskin garments were ordered from Russia.

The question of transport, the gravest of all raised by the project of wintering in Bulgaria, received particular attention. We have previously spoken of a line of railway in course of construction from Bender to Galatz; as many as 10,000 workmen were now engaged on it, and

the line was opened in the latter part of December. It was also decided that two other lines should be constructed; one from Fratesti to Simnitsa, the other from Sistova to Tirnova, via Gorny-Studen and Biela. The first was to be ready in the early part of December, and the second some time during January. These two lines would serve to convey supplies from Russia directly into the heart of Bulgaria; but a permanent passage over the Danube still had to be secured. At one time a fixed bridge was thought of, and M. Poliakov, a celebrated engineer, drew up an ingenious plan for a strong permanent bridge across the river, but one which should nevertheless be capable of adapting itself to the varying heights of the water. The project was a grand one; but there was so little certainty of success that it was ultimately resolved to maintain the bridges of boats as long as the weather permitted; then, when the drift ice floated down, they were to be removed, and transport was to be continued by means of a flotilla of steamers, which were to be collected at Sistova for the purpose. The execution of this plan was not considered to present any especial difficulty, as the ferry-boats over the Hudson at New York cross during the whole winter, and the stream there is twice as wide as the Danube at Sistova, whilst the mean temperature is lower, with a great tendency to the accumulation of ice.

The determination manifested in these preparations, and the arrival of nearly 100,000 men as reinforcements, considerably raised the spirit of the army of the south; and when news arrived of the crushing defeat of Mukhtar Pasha in Asia by the army of the Caucasus fatigues and distress were forgotten, and the army in Bulgaria thought only of achieving a similar victory in Europe.

It was about the middle of September that the regiments of the Guard commenced to arrive at the head-quarters at Gorny-Studen—which was the designated point of concentration; and by the end of October the army, placed under the common command of Prince Charles of Roumania and General Todleben, found itself reconstituted and ready for the task for which it was intended. The several corps which had taken part in the six days' battle in September had been by that time raised to their former strength by the incessant arrival of the men furnished from the depôts.

The army which was now proceeding to the investment of Plevna comprised, under these cir-

cumstances, two divisions of the 9th Corps, two divisions of the 4th Corps, two brigades detached from the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, the 4th Brigade of Chasseurs, three divisions of grenadiers, which, reckoning 10,000 men to a division, formed a total of more than 100,000 men. To these must also be added five divisions of cavalry, and the Roumanian army—about 35,000 men strong—which raised the effective of the army to nearly 150,000 bayonets and sabres. The artillery was composed of 558 field-guns and 50 large cannon.

General Kryloff's column, composed simply of cavalry, had proved, as we have shown, altogether powerless to secure the effective blockade which was indispensable for the success of the operations against Plevna. But the arrival of the reinforcements now enabled the Russians to take the most efficacious measures; and the object pursued in vain until that time was immediately attained, although at a somewhat considerable cost.

After his celebrated expedition over the Balkans and the dissolution of the corps of the advance-guard, General Gourko had taken the command of the 2nd division of cavalry of the Guard, which he had held before the war. An order of the day of the 4th October summoned him to replace General Kryloff in the command of the cavalry of the Russo-Roumanian army, and a few days afterwards he was placed at the head of the Imperial Guard, which had just arrived in its entirety before Plevna.

He assumed his new duties on the 21st October, and it was immediately decided that the main portion of the Guard should be intrusted with the occupation of the Sophia road. The Russian and Roumanian troops having from the 12th September remained in their positions, which extended to the east of Plevna in a semi-circle the extremities of which rested on the Vid, only three roads remained to Osman Pasha for communication with the outside—viz., the Rahova road, on the north-west; the Vratza road on the west; the Sophia road on the south-west. As there was no Turkish force of any great importance on the Rahova and Vratza roads, the Russian and Roumanian horsemen had been able to overrun nearly the whole length of them at pleasure, and they were practically closed to Osman Pasha. He was thus reduced to the one road from Sophia, and on this Chefket had concentrated his forces. If the Russians succeeded in securely

occupying any part of it, Plevna would be blockaded.

Gorny-Dubnik was chosen as the point at which the Guard should attempt to take possession of the road, because the ground in front of this village offered great advantages from a tactical point of view, and it was also the place nearest the line of communication with the Russian troops around Plevna, and in its neighbourhood. Its strategic advantages had, however, been also discerned by the Turks, and the position was the strongest link of the whole chain of intrenchments with which Chefket Pasha had fortified the road from Plevna to Sophia. On the most elevated point, between the village and the road, and to the west of the latter, he had erected a large redoubt, and a second had been constructed on the other side of the road. Both were surrounded by a series of advanced intrenchments, which extended to a considerable distance. To the north of these works the ground, perfectly open and level, descended by an imperceptible slope. On the east the ground also offered a slight descent and was covered with a very thick copse. Between the edge of this wood and the redoubt on the east the distance was about 500 yards. On the south and west the Turkish position was bordered by a rugged slope descending into a narrow ravine, the width of which did not exceed 250 paces. At about 2000 yards from the redoubt on the east, in the direction of Tchirikovo, a large space had been cleared in the wood, and this the Turks had likewise intrenched.

The commander of this position was Ahmed Hifzi Pasha—a good officer, and who, it will be remembered, had succeeded in getting the first convoy into Plevna. He had under him twenty battalions, amounting to from 7000 to 8000 men, but only four cannon. The numerical disproportion between the contending forces was thus very great, as General Gourko operated with the 1st and 2nd divisions of the Guard, the brigade of chasseurs of the Guard, a brigade of Roumanian infantry, six divisions of cavalry, and eighty-four cannon. But in fairness it must be borne in mind that, in addition to the resistance to be expected at Gorny-Dubnik, the Russians had to provide against an attack from other directions, as they knew that at a short distance—in the fortified positions of Telis and Dolny-Dubnik—other Turkish corps were con-

centrated, which could speedily come to the assistance of the garrison of Gorny-Dubnik. These corps were not, it is true, very numerous; but comparatively close at hand, on the one side, was all Osman Pasha's army, and on the other, to the south of Telis, Chefket Pasha's main army, which was estimated at about twenty-five battalions. Considering the enemy's situation, it was therefore necessary for Gourko to protect himself on both sides by detachments more or less strong, and for that purpose he was obliged to employ all his cavalry and a great part of his infantry.

Gourko designated for the direct attack on the position of Gorny-Dubnik, the sixteen battalions of the 2nd Infantry Division of the Guard, four battalions of chasseurs, sixty cannon, two squadrons of the private escort of the Emperor, and four sotnias of the 4th regiment of Don Cossacks—making a total of twenty battalions, six squadrons and sotnias, with their cannon. These troops were to surround the position on three sides, and so attack it by the north, east, and south. In order to cut off the retreat of the garrison, a brigade of Caucasus Cossacks, and two regiments of Roumanian cavalry, with six pieces of horse artillery, took up a position on the west, so that Gorny-Dubnik was completely surrounded. As he proposed after the capture of the position to fortify it and turn its front against Plevna, the Russian general attached the battalion of engineers to the 2nd Division of the Guard for that purpose.

General Gourko's plan thus provided in a very complete manner for all possible eventualities, and the position of the defenders of Gorny-Dubnik may from the first appear to have been hopeless. The taking of the place, however, proved by no means an easy task, ample as the means of the Russians may seem to have been. The Turk, it is true, found himself hemmed in on every side, but the desperate resistance he could make when held at bay had already been more than once found out by the Russians in this campaign. The new comers of the Imperial Guard were now to have a similar experience; and having neglected to be warned by that of their comrades before them, their temerity cost them very dearly.

The troops designed for attacking the position of Gorny-Dubnik were divided into three columns. They crossed the Vid during the night of the 23rd October, and were formed thus:—The right column, commanded by Major-general Ellis, was

placed about a mile from Tchirikovo. The column of the centre, under the orders of Major-general Baron von Zedeler, after having crossed the Vid, was established at about a quarter of a mile from Tchirikovo—not far from the road leading from that village to Tchoumakovtsi. The left column, commanded by Major-general Rosenbach, crossed the Vid at four o'clock in the morning, and was massed in the Svinar ravine, about a mile and a quarter from the river. Colonel Tcherevine's detachment of cavalry, about twelve sotnias of Cossacks, and two regiments of Roumanian cavalry, with six pieces of horse artillery, assembled in the night at the village of Abaskeui.

These columns left their preliminary positions at a quarter past six in the morning, with the exception of the column of the centre, which having to make the shortest journey, did not begin its march until half an hour later. The right and left column experienced some delay in their movements, and only arrived before the position of Gorny-Dubnik about half an hour after the column of the centre, which commenced the action about 8.30.

When this column had occupied the glade of which we have spoken, to the east of Gorny-Dubnik, and which was not defended by the Turks, it established its batteries there. A short time afterward the column of General Ellis arrived on the north of Gorny-Dubnik, and that of General Rosenbach on the south, and both at once opened fire. Colonel Tcherevine's column having also taken up a position on the west, opened a cannonade on that side, and the Turkish position was thus encompassed by a formidable circle of fire. The intrepid Ahmed Hifzi, apparently little concerned by the extensive demonstrations of his enemy, prepared himself for a heroic defence. Animated by his example, his soldiers endured, during the whole day, the frightful avalanche of iron which sixty pieces of artillery poured down on them without being able to answer, since they only had four cannon.

About ten o'clock in the morning, Colonel Lioubovitsky, commander of the grenadiers of the Guard, who formed a part of the column of the centre, judging that the attack had been sufficiently prepared, advanced his regiment towards the redoubt on the east. In spite of the violent and murderous fusillade which the Turks directed on them from both this and the principal redoubt, the grenadiers advanced with irresistible

ardour; and after having with loud hurrahs crossed the space which separated them from the redoubt, they penetrated into the work. The Turks could not sustain the shock, and took refuge in the principal redoubt. The grenadiers tried to pursue them in order to enter the second redoubt on their heels; but they encountered so murderous a fire that it was impossible for them to advance, and they were obliged to return to the redoubt they had captured.

This forward movement of the grenadiers had the most unfortunate results for the Russians. General Zeddeler ordered all the centre column to advance in order to sustain them, and Generals Ellis and Rosenbach, supposing a general attack to be taking place, likewise gave the order to attack to the right and left columns. This attack, badly combined, failed completely; and encouraged by symptoms of wavering on the part of their enemy, the Turks poured out an incessant torrent of musketry fire, against which no mortal courage could stand. Had even any considerable proportion taken effect, not a Russian could have survived. The redoubt was like one gigantic mitrailleuse, and the Russian losses were enormous. The officers, who marched at the head of their troops in order to lead them on, were almost all placed *hors de combat*. Two commanders of columns, Generals Zeddeler and Rosenbach, were wounded; Colonel Rounof, commanding the Pavlovsky regiment, was killed; Colonels Lioubovitsky and Skalon were wounded.

The day was thus going very badly for the Russians; and if Osman Pasha had come out from Plevna, and Chefket had advanced from Radomirce at this moment, the Imperial Guard would probably have inaugurated its operations by a bloody defeat. But Osman Pasha was kept back by a frightful cannonade which the siege batteries had opened in the morning, and by a series of demonstrations which made him believe that the Russians were going to attack him. As to Chefket, he had personal reasons for desiring not to see the Russians too closely. It was commonly believed that, in consequence of the atrocities committed in Bulgaria in the previous year under his orders, the Russians had condemned him to be hanged; and Chefket, naturally not anxious to expose himself to having this sentence executed, refrained from venturing out of Radomirce.

At two o'clock in the afternoon General Gourko

himself arrived at the batteries of the centre column, and was thus able to judge of the situation. The Russian troops had proceeded very near to the Turkish intrenchments, and were crouched down in all the cover they had been able to find, waiting, in this very critical situation, fresh orders. Many of the guns had in consequence to cease firing for fear of injuring their own men. To add to the misfortune, it was learnt at this moment that a column of chasseurs of the Guard, under Colonel Tchelistchew, which had been sent against Telis, had foolishly allowed themselves to be crushed there, and that the Gorny-Dubnik columns were consequently exposed to a flank attack on the left.

Colonel Tchelistchew's column had commenced its march at 6.30 a.m. from Svinar, where it had passed the night, and arrived at half past nine before Telis. A reconnaissance enabled it to ascertain that the Turkish works were composed of a great redoubt crossed by the road, which divided it into two almost equal parts; of a second redoubt erected to the west of the principal one, on the other side of the ravine; and of several other advanced intrenchments. Colonel Tchelistchew had been ordered to capture the works of Telis, if possible, and the east face of the redoubt was chosen for the attack. After a short cannonade from a dozen guns, the regiment of chasseurs formed in line of battle—its third and fourth battalions in the first line, the first and second in the second line. The ground being completely open and offering no shelter, the musketry of two advanced intrenchments of the Turks caused their assailants to sustain considerable losses; and in order to put an end to this, the two battalions of the first line received orders to take possession of them. These orders were promptly executed. At ten o'clock in the morning these battalions rushed onward and drove the Turks from the intrenchments with the bayonet; but, contrary to what they had hoped, they found no shelter there from the Turkish fire from the principal redoubt, which caused them still greater losses. In order to escape this terrible fusillade the battalions again advanced to attack the principal redoubt. Seeing this the battalions of the second line also rushed impulsively to the attack, without waiting for orders. But a fearful storm of projectiles was rained on them, and they were obliged to lie down behind some shelter about 100 paces from the principal rampart.

At this moment news arrived of a movement of several Turkish battalions, with artillery, on the south. Seeing that the redoubt could not be rapidly carried, and presuming that fresh Turkish troops were being brought up, Colonel Tchelistchew ordered the column to fall back. There was then enacted an abominable scene of horror, which was attested a few days afterwards by two English surgeons who were in Telis, and who were made prisoners with the Turkish garrison. From 200 to 300 wounded Russians remained on the ground; and when the Turks came out immediately after the retreat of Tchelistchew's column, they were all killed, after being subjected to the torture of most horrible and disgraceful mutilations. The total losses of the regiment amounted to nearly half its effective strength. Seven officers, one of whom was a colonel, were killed, nineteen officers wounded, and 947 men placed *hors de combat*.

This distressing intelligence reached Gourko at the same time that he ascertained the perilous situation in which the untimely impetuosity of the grenadiers had placed his army at Gorny-Dubnik. Ahmed Hifzi Pasha could now receive reinforcements from the south; the road was open, and the excellent dispositions of the Russian general were baffled. Gourko nevertheless considered it absolutely necessary to continue the fight, and, if possible, finish it promptly, in order to prevent the arrival of Cheket Pasha, if, taking advantage of the road being open, he hastened from Radomirce.

The Russian commander accordingly fixed three o'clock in the afternoon for the decisive attack, and gave orders in person to General Brock, who had taken the command of the 1st brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division of the Guard, and sent a written order to General Ellis. To insure that the attack should be made simultaneously by all the troops, he decided that at the proper moment he would fire three volleys from the batteries on the left; that three salvos should afterwards be fired successively by the batteries of the centre and those of the right; and that after the last salvo fired by the latter, all the troops should advance to the attack. Gourko calculated that an attack thus effected simultaneously on all points, and at very short distances (from 100 to 400 paces), must be crowned with success. After having given these orders, he went to the left column and examined the position of all the troops. He

afterwards returned to the battery, where he personally gave the necessary orders to his aide-de-camp, General Schouvaloff. But before General Schouvaloff had had time to transmit his orders to the troops, three salvos were fired successively by the batteries of the right column, and that column immediately advanced to the attack. The signal arranged was thus not observed, and the intentions of General Gourko as to a simultaneous attack were thwarted a second time.

"It was with fainting heart," said the General in his report, "that I followed what was about to take place; for, instead of a simultaneous attack on all points, there were going to be isolated attacks, the success of which was more than doubtful. In order to repair the mistake as much as possible, and to support the right column, which had already commenced the attack, I immediately despatched orderly officers with instructions to the troops not to await the signal arranged, but at once to support the attack of the right column. It was now impossible, however, to prevent a series of successive attacks, although—received by such an extremely murderous fire—no single body of troops could reach the great redoubt. But with the exception of the Finland regiment none of them retreated; they advanced and lay down behind different shelters, and some arrived within forty paces of the redoubt. As to the Finland regiment, not finding any shelter before it, it was obliged to fall back and to establish itself anew on the slope of the height in the space which it previously occupied."

After this series of attacks, which terminated about four in the afternoon, all the batteries ceased firing, for the Russian troops were so near the redoubt as to be greatly endangered by their own artillery. The position seized by the grenadiers in the earliest attack had neutralized the fire of most of the Russian artillery, by rendering it impossible for it to be used without shelling their own men; and now, from the same cause, the whole sixty guns were silenced.

To withdraw the troops in order to re-open a cannonade was, however, absolutely impossible on account of the losses which they would certainly have sustained in such a movement, and also because it would have had such an injurious effect on the *morale* of the troops. General Gourko therefore decided to leave them in the positions they occupied, and to make a fresh attack at nightfall.

In the meantime, unknown to the General, a force was accumulating close to the great redoubt which was to aid materially in its capture. The men who had taken the small redoubt made an attempt upon the larger one, and only desisted in the face of an infernal hail from Winchester carbines, which enabled their holders to pour out a stream of fifteen bullets without stopping to reload. As the day went on, however, a few of the boldest amongst the Russians stole out from the captured earthwork, dodged behind first one and then another natural bit of cover, crept along the ditch of the *chaussée*, and got into a little house which stood on the west side. A straw stack near afforded shelter for one or two other soldiers who had followed the example of the first. Now it became the smart thing to do in full sight of all to jump from the little redoubt into the ditch, then rush into the house, or behind the straw stack. One soldier gave courage to the other; the enterprising spirit of the first spread like a contagion among the rest, and in an hour or two the little house was so full that those who came last all out of breath could find no cover there, and were obliged to go on farther, and did go on, and threw themselves into the very ditch of the great redoubt—those who reached there. As we have said, the artillery had long ceased firing for fear of injuring the attacking parties, but the musketry kept up a continuous rattle, which swelled and diminished as the little knots of men showed themselves here and there. The few who got into the ditch found it the only place where there was perfect shelter, much to their surprise, and beckoned and called the others to follow them, which they did as opportunity offered, until there was quite a considerable force collected, literally under the very guns of the enemy. The Turks could not fire on them, because to hit them they were obliged to stand up on the parapet, and this was certain death. Beams and stones were thrown over into the ditch, and the Russians responded with lumps of earth and pebbles; but all the time they remained there they were not idle, for they diligently dug steps in the steep bank of the ditch, by which they could mount to the parapet. The number of men increased rapidly as night approached, and the run could be made with greater impunity.

In the meantime a final and determined effort was being prepared for an advance upon the

large redoubt. At half past five o'clock a very strong column of Guards was formed in Gorny-Dubnik; these were to attack the Turkish redoubt *en masse*, and a division of 5000 men was appointed as a reserve. The Guards were on their mettle; "Conquer or die" was the word which ran down the ranks, and there was no one who saw that column advance who did not feel that the Turkish position was doomed. Up the slope of the plateau and onward on the redoubt marched the gallant column, as firm and cool as if they were on the parade ground. As they gained the height and strode determinedly forward towards the earthworks, a deep murmur, half of admiration, half of wonder, was heard above the roar of the artillery. The 5000 men of the reserve doffed their *kypis* and crossed themselves. An exclamation of "Bozi! bozi!" (Great) rose from every tongue as the Guardsmen marched firmly forward in the face of death. The artillery also advanced to within 100 yards of the Turkish redoubt; and at this short distance poured in an effective and deadly shell-fire, the effect of which was to create a scene of indescribable horror. The blockhouses within the redoubt were speedily in flames; the wounded and the horses were being burnt alive; the trappings of the artillery were on fire, and the explosion of cartridges which lay about mingled with the cries of the sufferers, the rattle of the infantry fire, and the thunder of the guns. The atmosphere of the camp was a thick yellow mist of dust and smoke, made lurid by the scarlet tints of the setting sun. Suddenly a deep hurrah rose above the din; and the rattle of the musketry ceased for a moment. The men in the ditch, seeing the Guards advancing, with one accord clambered up the bank and gained the parapet, the Guards following in an irresistible stream, and the Turkish breastwork was won. Still, however, the Turks fought most desperately; and but for a clever move on the part of the tirailleur brigade, the success of the Russians would yet have been only attained after a long and costly struggle. The splendid tirailleur brigade, however, four battalions strong, crept round by the ravines and the village completely in rear of the redoubt, and the men, breaking out of the hands of their commanders, rushed up to the glacis, and lying down, swept the whole rear parapet with their Berdans. This was about the same moment that the men of the Finland

regiment forced an entrance on the other side; and seeing themselves thus outwitted and outnumbered the Turks lost heart, and about six o'clock Ahmed Hifzi hoisted the white flag.

Only 1500 of the defenders were found remaining in the redoubt; 3500 Turkish dead and wounded lay within the work, while nearly 5000 Turks had, in spite of Colonel Tcherevine's force, made good their retreat either to Plevna or Telis, after having, with only four guns, held their ground from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. against sixty guns and more than three times their own numbers of the finest battalions of the far-famed Imperial Guard of Russia. The redoubt, it was true, had been lost, but its captors had been made to pay a heavy price for it, their losses amounting to nearly 4000 men. In the two actions of Gorny-Dubnik and Telis every brigade and regimental commander was killed or wounded; and as nearly all the officers of the Guard were personally known at head-quarters, the fact of 200 of them being placed *hors de combat* threw a deep gloom over the members of the Russian Staff. The most material advantage achieved by the capture of Gorny-Dubnik was the fact that the road from Sophia was thereby cut, and any further reinforcements to Plevna were effectually stopped. The complete investment of Plevna might also be said to have been accomplished by it, and Osman Pasha was now shut in upon the side on which, on the 12th September, he had fought with the most desperate energy to keep open an outlet. The actual captures made were comparatively small if taken in connection with the serious losses sustained by the Russians, and comprised one Pasha, fifty-three officers, and a total of 2235 Turkish soldiers, with four Krupp cannon and a large quantity of rifles.

It was impossible, however, from a tactical point of view, for General Gourko to remain at Gorny-Dubnik, inasmuch as he was now within six miles on either side, between two other places on the Sophia road which had been seized upon by Chefket and fortified with the same view as Gorny-Dubnik itself. Telis, six miles southward, and Dolny-Dubnik, six miles north-west of Gourko's present position, were two other halting or shelter-stations, which were to have insured the regular provisioning of Plevna, or when that became difficult, to offer a safe road by which Osman Pasha could retire to Sophia. Telis, as we have seen, had already been attacked by the Russians on the 24th October; but with

an indiscreet impetuosity on the part of the Guards that had resulted in a very sanguinary repulse. Within four days, however, of the capture of Gorny-Dubnik General Gourko had assembled the principal part of his force, with nearly seventy guns, around Telis. Every preparation was made to insure the success of the attack on this occasion; and as Telis was fortified by two redoubts, very advantageously situated, there appeared no reason why the place should surrender with less resistance than had been encountered from Hifzi Pasha at Gorny-Dubnik. The commander, Hakki Pasha, however, was a very different man. The resistance offered was a mere farce, and the place was taken with over 4000 prisoners, with the loss of hardly a dozen Russians.

A severe cannonade was opened upon Telis at 11 a.m. on the 28th October, and at about two o'clock the Turks ceased to reply, and sent out a white flag. The Pasha wished to know if the officers would, in the event of a capitulation, be allowed to retain their property; and on this being agreed to, he promptly offered to consent to any other conditions of surrender.

The Russians advanced to take possession of the village, and did so quietly enough until they came upon the evidences of the barbarous mutilations which have been already mentioned as having taken place on the 24th. Their comrades lay scattered about the ground, mangled and disfigured, and with unmistakable traces of the brutalities having been inflicted after the men had fallen, but whilst still alive. Uttering a yell of rage, the Russians made a terrible onslaught upon the Turks; and it was only after the greatest difficulty that the exasperated men could be restored to discipline and quiet. About fifty Turks were thus killed, and the Russians were of course laid open to the charge of violating the flag of truce flying at the time; though, if extenuating circumstances could ever be pleaded for such an outrage, this was certainly an occasion in which some allowance might be made.

Rather more than 4000 prisoners were taken, four guns, thousands of small arms, and an unusually large quantity of cartridges. Amongst the prisoners were two English surgeons, who had been witnesses of the atrocities perpetrated upon wounded Russians after the fight of the 24th, and both of whom shared the fate of the Turkish prisoners so far as to be sent to Russia.

CHAPTER XXX.

Disquietude in Plevna at the Military Situation—Annoyance of Ghazi Osman at the Mismanagement of the Turkish Military Council—Removal of the Sick and Wounded from Plevna—A reinforcement declined—Chefket Pasha retreats precipitately to Oukhank—Dispersion of the Turkish Forces in the Country around Plevna—Occupation of Teteven, Vratza, and Rahova—Bearing of these Movements upon the fate of Osman Pasha—General Todleben's Report on the Siege of Plevna—No further Front Attacks to be made—Formation of the several Links in the Chain of Environment—Positions and Commanders of the Sectors—Defensive measures of Osman Pasha—Description of the Turkish Line of Fortifications—Interest aroused in Military circles by the Plevna Earthworks—Description of the Construction of the Redoubts—Interior Arrangements of the Works—Armament and Provision for Musketry Fire—Closing in of the Russian Lines—Difficulty of Discovering the Russian Earthworks—Regular Siege-works carried out by the Roumanians—Curious Amusements of Warfare—Desire of Roumanians to Storm the Second Grivica—Clever Tactics of the Turks—The Redoubt taken by the Roumanians, and held for twenty minutes—Immense losses for half an hour's Fighting—Inconvenient Projection of the Turkish Defences—Skobelev charged with Forcing them back—Gallant Assault and Capture of the "Green Hill"—Advantages of thus rectifying the Russian Line—Skobelev wounded at last—Plevna completely isolated—The Turkish Military Council aroused to the Danger threatening Osman Pasha and his Army—Mehemet Ali ordered to organize a Relieving Force—General Mûster of Military "Odds and Ends"—An Unpromising Prospect for Mehemet—Precautionary Steps of the Russians—Vigorous advance of General Gourko—Design for the Attack of Provitz—Extraordinary March of General Rauch—Enormous Difficulties encountered by his Men—Loss of Artillery Caissons over a Precipice—Severe Sufferings of the Heroic Force—Repulse of a band of Bashi-bazouks—Part taken by Schouvaloff's Column—Triumphant Success of the Expeditions—A Disaster occurs to the Novatchin Column—Simultaneous Movement upon Etropol—Great Strategic Advantages of the Town—Difficulties of General Dandeville's Column—Remarkable Precision of the combined Attack upon Etropol—Proceedings of Mehemet Ali and his Army of Relief—Positions of the Army near Orkhanie—Panic caused by the Russian Advance—Retreat of Mehemet Ali's Force—Accumulation of Misfortunes—Retreat of Mustapha Pasha, and Occupation of Etropol by General Gourko—Orkhanie no longer Tenable—The Turks, out-manœuvred at Baba-Konak, retreat to Kamarli—Remarkable out-flanking Strategy of General Gourko—Inside Plevna during the Siege—Failure of Provisions, Fuel, and Clothing—Attempts to obtain the Surrender of Osman Pasha—An offer of conditional Capitulation Declined—Preparations for the Expected Turkish Sortie—Coming Events casting their Shadows before them—Last Night of the Turks in Plevna—Information of Deserters verified—Preparations for Departure—Revelations on the morning of December 10—Osman Pasha's Plan and Order of Battle—Wonderful March of the Turks—Deadly Struggle in the Trenches—Halt in the Turkish Advance—Rallying of the Russians, and Repulse of the Turks—Osman Pasha Wounded—Terrible Scene of Confusion—Arrival of the Emperor of Russia—Closing in of the Russians upon Plevna and its Fortifications—Cessation of the Battle—The Turks realize their Position, and Plevna Surrenders—Skobelev's arrival at the Bridge over the Vîd—Scene there and on the Battle-field around—General Stroukoff's Interview with Osman Pasha—General Ganetsky visits the Turkish Commander—Osman Surrenders his Sword, and the Troops lay down their Arms—Meeting of Osman Pasha with the Grand-duke and Prince Charles—Visit of the Pasha to the Emperor—*Te Deum* in one of the Redoubts—Departure of the Emperor and Prince Charles—Osman Pasha and the Turkish "Atrocities"—Number of Prisoners taken—Disparities between the Turkish and Russian Forces—Barbarous treatment of the Turkish Prisoners—Horrible Scenes within Plevna after its Capitulation—Sickening Callousness of the Bulgarians—The Living buried with the Dead—Military Position of the Combatants at the close of the Siege of Plevna—An Unpromising outlook for Turkey—The Strategy of Osman Pasha—Did he take up the best Position?—Superiority of Lovatz over Plevna—Should he have remained in Plevna until made a Prisoner in his own Fortifications?—His Powerlessness for Offensive Operations—Loss of a Grand Opportunity—How Osman Pasha really favoured the Russians.

THE news of the events related in our last chapter naturally caused the greatest anxiety in Plevna. The main avenue of communication was now hopelessly closed; and in various ways at least 10,000 of the best Turkish troops had been lost at a time when the country was drained of almost all its reserves of men. Osman Pasha himself appeared to share a little of the general dejection, and for hours together he paced to and fro in front of his house, only breaking silence by an occasional order, given in a brief and imperative tone to some of his staff or other officers making their reports to him. Tefvik Pasha, his brigadier-general and chief of the Staff, a distinguished young officer, skilful and well educated, was the only person Osman seemed disposed to trust; and to him the

General expressed himself as furious at the unskilful tactics of Chefket Pasha, and at the inconsiderateness of the Ministry in confiding important commands to such incompetent and disreputable men as Hakki Pasha.

The unfortunate Osman had only too ample cause for complaint of the way in which matters were being managed at Constantinople. More than two months previously he had asked for some armourers to be sent up from the arsenal at Constantinople, for the repair of arms. A certain number was accordingly directed to proceed to Plevna. The men arrived safely enough, but not one of them had been furnished with a single implement of their craft; they were consequently useless, and had to be sent back the following day.

to Constantinople—where they remained. The Russian artillery fire had wrought little damage upon the Turkish earthworks but what might readily be repaired: but damages to guns, irreparable in the absence of proper artificers, were keenly felt when it was becoming of vital importance to get the utmost use out of every weapon.

It was equally necessary to carefully husband all available resources of food, and it was with this view that Osman had already handed over to Chefket Pasha, for transport to Sophia, an immense number of sick and wounded. The removal involved much suffering to the unfortunates, many of whom died on the way; and the step was protested against by several British doctors who, as agents of the Stafford House Committee, had been sent to Plevna. Osman Pasha, however, considered himself justified by the exigencies of his situation. For much the same reason he at once declined the offer of the Russians to send into Plevna the 7000 Turks captured at Gorny-Dubnik and Telis. Osman, now in much more need of provisions than soldiers, was not slow to see that it was only intended as a means of starving him more promptly. He therefore replied that, if the men approached Plevna, he would open fire upon them, and if Hakki Pasha came within reach he would have him seized and hanged upon the spot. Osman Pasha also told the Grand-duke's messenger that the Russians had better prepare for a regular siege during the winter, inasmuch as he had provisions for more than eight months, and was resolved to defend his position to the last.

After having strengthened and turned against Plevna the fortified works established by the Turks at Gorny-Dubnik and at Telis, General Gourko continued his advance southwards on the Sophia road. Chefket Pasha had been at Radomiree during the capture of Telis, which position he might have prevented from falling so soon, had he hastened to it directly after the affair of Gorny-Dubnik on October 24. As, however, we have before shown, Chefket had special reasons for keeping out of the way; and immediately on hearing of the capture of Telis he retreated so precipitately towards Orkhanie that he never thought of destroying the Radomiree bridge, by which, with a few other equally simple steps, he might at least have retarded the Russian march by several days.

While the main body went southwards a detachment of Gourko's force was sent up the road on

31st October against Dolny-Dubnik, the first outlying fortified place to the west of Plevna across the Vid. This position, like those already taken by the Russians, had been covered with intrenchments; but Osman Pasha, judging it too far from his lines, and useless for defence after the Sophia road was lost to him, withdrew his troops into Plevna, so that the Russians occupied it without striking a blow. In this instance, also, they materially strengthened the fortifications, and turned them against the place they were originally designed to cover and defend.

While General Gourko was thus firmly establishing himself on the Sophia road, measures were taken to protect his flank and rear against any Turkish corps which might arrive from the direction of the Balkans or from Widdin. Four roads were still open—the main Sophia road from Orkhanie southwards; the road from Teteven, parallel to it, which crossed the Balkans and was practicable for an army advancing from Slatitza; the road from Vratza; and that from Rahova. Detachments were sent on each of these four roads, and by the occupation of all the various strong positions upon them, the width of the circle in which Osman Pasha was inclosed was immensely increased, and his chances of retreat were rendered more and more problematical.

The Turks fought with their usual bravery at Teteven, but were overpowered, and on the 1st November, the Russian detachment made its triumphal entry into the town.

The detachment sent on the Orkhanie road to pursue Chefket Pasha, after his retreat from Radomiree, occupied Lukovitz, Petreven, and Jablanitza—the latter town less than twenty-five miles from Orkhanie—without fighting, although works had been constructed at each of the positions.

Vratza was occupied on November 9, after a somewhat severe struggle; and in it were found large stores of provisions and flour. Near the lines was also a convoy of waggons, which had been employed in transporting provisions from Widdin to Orkhanie, and which served admirably to convey the captured stores to Gorny-Dubnik.

The Rahova road might have been occupied on the portions adjacent to Plevna, without any necessity for operations upon it beyond the Isker, so far as military necessities were concerned. With the Russo-Roumanian army in strongly-intrenched and fortified positions near the Vid,

the possibility of Osman Pasha successfully retreating to Widdin by the Rahova road was as hopeless as if the whole length of the road had been in Russian possession; and certainly no serious danger could have been apprehended to the army around Plevna from the few Turkish troops at Rahova. There were, however, other considerations which induced the despatch of a force to the latter place. Situated as it was on the right bank of the Danube, it was a convenient shelter from which bands of Turkish troops were continually making aggressions into Roumanian territory across the river; secondly, it was considered desirable to acquire here a new point for establishing regular and secure communications between the two banks of the river; and thirdly, an enlarged foraging district had now become most urgently necessary for the immense masses of cavalry operating on the western side of Plevna, beyond the Vid. The town was accordingly attacked by a force consisting chiefly of Roumanians, and after a gallant resistance, extending over two days, was finally captured on the 21st November.

The chief interest of these operations consisted in their bearing upon the fate of Osman Pasha—having, indeed, been mainly undertaken to give additional security to the investment of his position. We will now return to what had been passing under the walls of Plevna itself, while this process of its entire isolation was being carried out.

The disastrous repulse of their assaults on the 11th and 12th September had proved to the Russians the utter futility of hurling brave men against the admirably-constructed breastworks and batteries of the Turks; and, as stated in our previous chapter, the call for General Todleben signified a willingness at last to adopt tactics which, though more tedious, would in the end be far more certain. After the surrender of Plevna, the celebrated engineer drew up a report which gave a brief view of both the Turkish and Russian positions. "Osman Pasha's army," said General Todleben, "occupied beneath the walls of Plevna an intrenched camp, very easy to defend, and presenting several lines of formidable positions, which the enemy, during our long sojourn before the place, beginning at the end of July, had rendered stronger and stronger—profiting by all the advantages of ground, and very cleverly adapting his engineering works to them. The force of

resistance presented by these works was rendered greater by the excellence of the arms of precision, and by the mass of cartridges possessed by the enemy, which permitted him to cover with a hail of lead the whole of the ground in front of his works to a distance of a mile and a quarter. Apart from this, the positions of the enemy by their breadth and depth enabled him to keep his reserves beyond range of our artillery. Finally, a deep ravine near the town itself permitted him to conceal his reserves in case of attack on our part, and hold them in readiness for securing the menaced point. These conditions, so disadvantageous to us, explain to a great extent the failure of our assault of the 11th and 12th September against the position of Plevna, and the decision then taken, in order to spare a further useless effusion of blood, not to attempt to capture the place by means of an attack, but to await the arrival of reinforcements, and to invest the Turkish army in a systematic manner. The investment of the intrenched camp of Plevna became complete when the Guard Corps arrived, and Gorny-Dubnik, on the Sophia road, was taken on the 24th October. From that moment the communications of Osman Pasha were definitely cut, and his army had now only to choose between an attempt to break through the investing line or surrender so soon as the stock of provisions became exhausted. The power of the Turkish army to hold out after our investment depended, of course, on the quantity of provisions at his disposal. It was very difficult for us to find out what Osman Pasha had really within his reach; but according to information brought to us, it appeared that the resources of the army of Plevna would certainly be exhausted within two months at most. As soon as we had decided that to reduce Plevna and its army we must strictly invest the place, all idea of making a new assault was abandoned. A fresh attack could only have given us fresh losses, without hastening the Turkish surrender. Our sole object then was to narrow gradually the circle of investment, and to take all necessary measures to prevent the enemy from breaking out at any one point. These measures consisted in strengthening the position of investment, in digging ditches for sharpshooters and trenches for batteries, and in establishing lunettes and redoubts at commanding points. It was also necessary to concentrate the fire of our artillery against the enemy's fortifications, to bring our

trenches and ditches nearer and nearer to his positions, and to connect our own positions by good roads, along which sign-posts were placed to facilitate the movements of troops. We had, further, to construct bridges, and to establish telegraphic communication all round the line of investment—in a word, to take all measures necessary for receiving the enemy, in case of his coming out, with the greatest possible number of troops concentrated as rapidly as possible, at whatsoever point he might choose for his attack. The positions established round Plevna, extending along a distance of seventy *versts* (forty-seven miles), were divided into six sections the defence of which was intrusted to detachments whose numbers varied with the importance of the duties required of each."

The various sections, of investment referred to by General Todleben were arranged as follows:—

First section between Bivolar (*Susurlu*) and the *Grivica* redoubt; under the orders of General Cernat, commander of the Roumanian Corps.

Second section, from *Grivica* to the *Galitz* redoubt; under Lieutenant-General Baron Kru-dener, commander of the 9th Corps.

Third section, from the *Galitz* redoubt to the *Tucenica* ravine; under Lieutenant-General Zotoff, commander of the 4th Corps.

Fourth section, between the *Tucenica* and *Karaguj* ravines; under Lieutenant-General Skobelev, commander of the 16th Division of infantry.

Fifth section, between the ravine of *Karaguj* and the right bank of the *Vid* to the village of *Tarnina*; under Lieutenant-General Kataley, commander of the 3rd Division of infantry of the Guard.

Sixth section, along the left bank of the *Vid*, including the positions of Bivolar (*Susurlu*) on the right bank of that river; under the orders of Lieutenant-General Ganetsky, commander of the Corps of grenadiers.

While these arrangements were being made, Osman Pasha, on his part, was taking very active steps to still further strengthen his already almost impregnable position. Warned by Skobelev's temporary success on the 11th September of the weakness of his right, he had other redoubts constructed in that direction, until his lines of defence comprised more than twenty redoubts, with innumerable rifle trenches, batteries, and covered ways. The Plan of Plevna attached will, with the following description, give a good idea of the

situation of the Turkish works, as well as of the Russian lines of investment.

Osman Pasha's defences were situated on ridges which rose considerably above the surrounding country, and it will facilitate the comprehension of them if the reader will follow our description upon the Plan. Commencing at the *Vid* north of Plevna, we find the heights of *Opanetz* rising 600 feet above the river, and crowned with three Turkish redoubts, which we will call respectively Nos. 1, 2, and 3. South-east of this height is *Bukova* ridge, rising to an elevation equal to that of *Opanetz*, and separated from it by a slight depression; east of *Bukova* ridge is the celebrated ridge of *Grivica*, separated from the former by a deep valley, in which is the village of *Bukova*, and on the slope, the redoubt No. 4, defending the valley. The crest of the *Grivica* ridge was so flat that a redoubt placed upon the top of it could not have commanded the slopes on either side; therefore, the Turks built a work on each side of the crest to sweep both flanks of the hill. These redoubts, which we will call Nos. 5 and 6, were the two *Grivica* works, one of which—the largest of the two indicated on our Plan—the Roumanians captured on the sanguinary 11th of September. No. 5 was about 600 feet distant to the west. The irregular figure west of the two redoubts indicates the intrenched camp which crowned the western end of the *Grivica* ridge. This brings us to the valley of the *Grivica* river, in which lies the village of the same name. The *Plevna-Biela* road comes down the southern slope of the *Grivica* ridge, and enters the valley at the village. Crossing the road we come on its southern side to an elevation, called by the Russians *Osman* ridge, bristling with redoubts—Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13—defending the approach to Plevna by the *Biela* road, the only practicable road on the eastern side of the Moslem stronghold. It was the one at the corner—No. 11, counting south-west from the work lying athwart the road—which *Kryloff's* men twice endeavoured to take on September 11: 5000 men laid down their lives in the effort to capture this great circular southern redoubt; but in the face of the desolating fire poured down from the whole cluster of defences here, the efforts were in vain. Nos. 14 (the work nearest Plevna) and 15 were the two works we have in previous chapters referred to as the "great square double redoubt," which was captured by Skobelev on the

11th September, and from which he was driven after holding his position with his shattered battalions for twenty-four hours, during which time he vainly called for reinforcements. The two were so connected by a covered way as to have somewhat the appearance of a single work, and the fall of one inevitably entailed that of the other. It will readily be seen from our Plan, that had Skobelev been properly supported, Plevna would in all probability have fallen, as he had pierced the centre of the Turkish line. No. 16, a little to the south-west of 15, was one of the works constructed by Osman Pasha as a measure of additional precaution after the 11th September. No. 17 is the Krisin redoubt. It was a very large work, with a high "command;" apparently impregnable itself to any assault, while well able to inflict immense damage upon any assailant of its neighbours. In front of the Krisin redoubt we would direct the reader's special attention to the manner in which the Turkish position was spread out in the direction of the Lovatz road, as we shall presently have occasion to describe the drawing in of the Russian lines of investment on that side. Nos. 18, 19, and 20 defended the southern front of the Krisin ridge, and Nos. 21, 22, and 23 the western end of the Krisin and Moslem ridges; while open batteries protected the bridge over the Vid on the Sophia road, which here entered Plevna.

The unprecedented manner in which the earth-works constructed by the Turks for the defence of Plevna held out against the most determined attacks made upon them by an enemy of vastly superior numerical strength, naturally aroused the curiosity of soldiers of all nations with regard to the details of the design, trace, profile, and interior arrangements of fortifications which, although begun in haste and completed for the most part under the fire of the enemy, nevertheless proved to be tactically unassailable. Most of these works were closed redoubts of a quadrangular trace, with large traverses in the form of a cross in the interior. The sites for them were chosen with much skill, and their outline was invariably traced so as to conform to the accidents of the ground. At the same time, no especial care seems to have been taken to construct the redoubts to give the greatest amount of fire over the ground in front. On the contrary, they appear rather to have been intended to serve as points of support to the troops outside them, with a view of enabling

these to hold their position for as long a time as possible, the task of sweeping the approaches with musketry fire being intrusted to men posted in shelter trenches based on the redoubts; the longer faces of these latter, again, being directed so as to flank the long line of trenches. The parapets of the inclosed works were of no great height; their command, or the height of the highest part, the crest line, above the ground, being generally only six feet or seven feet. The thickness of the parapets varied considerably—the faces exposed to artillery fire being frequently twenty feet thick; while the gorges, or rear faces, of the advanced redoubts and the front faces of the works of the second line were only from seven feet to ten feet thick. A noticeable peculiarity in all the works was the steepness of the exterior slope; the base of this slope being rarely more than half its height, instead of being equal to or greater than the latter, as is the case in the field-works constructed by all European armies. Moreover, the slope was very generally revetted either with gabions or sods; a work seldom undertaken in ordinary field fortification. In order to render the redoubts as secure as possible against escalade, the ditches were of such dimensions as to render them formidable obstacles. Their width at the top varied from thirteen feet to twenty feet, while their depth was generally from eight feet to twelve feet; and as the earth was of a clayey and tenacious nature, and would therefore stand at an unusually steep slope, both the escarps and counterescarps were generally cut away nearly perpendicularly. Berms were seldom employed.

With regard to the interior arrangements of the works, the most striking feature was the large number of substantial traverses constructed both on the terreplein of the work and also on the parapets, to protect the defenders from reverse and enfilade fire. The larger traverses in the interior were usually of the same height as the parapet, although in a few instances they towered several feet above it, and were fourteen feet thick. Some of them were arranged so that they could be utilized for prolonging the defence of the interior of the work if the enemy had succeeded in establishing himself on the parapet; but the greater number were constructed solely for the purpose of giving cover to a portion of the garrison in bomb-proof shelters excavated under and in rear of the traverses. The earth required for the construction

of these traverses was obtained from the interior of the work, so that the whole of the terreplein was by this means in many cases lowered two or three feet below the natural level of the ground. Besides these shelters under the traverses, other similar constructions were arranged under the parapets and barbettes; and in some cases also in the ditch, under the counterscarp. The manner in which all these covers were made was very simple. An excavation four and a half feet deep, seven feet wide, and generally fifteen feet long, was first dug. A roof was then formed of logs of timber, resting on the sides of the excavation, and rising up so as to form a ridge in the middle, which was supported by one or two stout uprights. Upon these logs a layer of grass or straw was placed, and upon this again some three or four feet of earth was piled up. Within these underground barracks the garrisons of the several redoubts lay in very tolerable safety, their arms standing loaded, and everything ready for the signal of an approaching enemy.

Finally, the redoubts were generally armed with from three to six guns, firing *en barbette*, with bonnettes, or mounds of earth, thrown up on the superior slope of the parapet between the guns, to protect the men serving them as much as possible from the enemy's fire; when the guns were not required for use they were withdrawn from the barbettes, and run down into trenches excavated for the purpose in rear of the parapets or traverses. Banquettes, to enable infantry to fire over the crest, were constructed along the whole length of the parapet. In most of the works also a kind of covered way, formed by excavating a trench two or three feet deep along the top of the counterscarp, was provided, to give a second tier of musketry fire; and, finally, in some few cases a third tier of fire was obtained from a trench on the glacis, in advance of and parallel to the top of the counterscarp. The entrances to the redoubts were generally defended by traverses, provided with a banquette, constructed in the interior of the work in rear of the opening, and by shelter trenches excavated in rear of the work altogether.

When it was once understood that the circle of investment was complete, the allied lines gradually advanced nearer and nearer to those of the Turks, and with each advance a new line of intrenchment was constructed, and the intervening spaces between the first and subsequent allied lines were

consequently bristling with parapets. At no point, however, were the Russian earthworks very conspicuous to the Turks, being usually masked by trees, shrubs, &c., so as to afford the smallest possible target for their opponents. There was no place on the line where regular siege operations were carried on, except at the Grivica redoubt, where the Roumanians sapped almost close up to the neighbouring Turkish earthwork. The parallels were carried to within thirty yards of the latter, and through loopholes and crevices between sandbags the Turkish rifle muzzles could be plainly seen. The curious amenities of warfare were here carried on—friendly conversation and banter frequently taking place between men ready, and even anxious, to engage in mortal grapple with each other at the word of command. The Turks sometimes amused themselves by throwing large lumps of earth and stones into the Roumanian trenches, and now and then adopted the less harmless device of exposing a dummy Turk, and sending a volley at the unfortunate Roumanians, who were incautious enough to expose themselves in their anxiety to get a shot at the supposed enemy. Continuing their siege works perfectly according to rule, the Roumanians, by about the middle of October, had carried the sap to within forty paces of their enemy, and burned for the distinction of an enterprise in which they should act alone. The capture of the Turkish position here would have had little influence on the investment operations; but Prince Charles, unwilling to damp the ardour of his troops, consented. The assault was made on the 19th October, when an enormous mass of stormers poured upon the redoubt with the idea of taking it by an overwhelming rush. From the erewhile quiet "No. 5," however, there blazed out a torrent of fire before which it seemed as if nothing could live. The Turks were well prepared for dominating the two faces where a possible attack might be made. They had arranged three successive tiers of rifle pits, one above the other, thus enabling them to bring about 20,000 shots per minute to bear upon the point assailed. The work was nevertheless carried by the impetuous and determined charge of the Roumanians. It was, however, only held for about twenty minutes, when the rashly-gallant troops of Prince Charles, finding that they were being decimated to no purpose whatever, retired, leaving 1000 of their comrades dead or wounded

upon the field. Such losses in so brief a fight bear honourable testimony alike to the valour of the Roumanians, and the excellence of Osman Pasha's defensive tactics.

In the Russian portions of the circumvallation the lines were brought within close rifle range, and the Turkish outposts pushed back, as opportunity offered. We have already drawn attention, however, to the very considerable impingement of the Turks upon the Russian lines at Krisin and Brestovec. Skobelev had been ordered to retire from the positions he won just previous to the assault of September 11, on the ground that they were too dangerously exposed; and on his falling back to Tucenica the Turks immediately took possession of them, and erected new redoubts and numerous trenches. The Turkish position thus formed a great projection into the lines of the Russians, and obliged the latter to make an extensive bend, which seriously impeded communication between Skobelev's and Zotoff's besieging sections, and constituted a decidedly weak point in the circle of investment.

It was considered by the Grand-duke and General Todleben extremely desirable that this portion of their lines should be rectified, and the task was confided to General Skobelev, whose section was that chiefly inconvenienced, and even threatened, by the Turks occupying there so prominent a position. As a first step, on the night of the 4th November he occupied the village of Brestovec, where defensive works were at once thrown up. Some distance in front of the village was a wooded elevation known as Monte Verte, or the "Green Hill," which constituted the strongest position of the Turks between Brestovec and the line of their redoubts. No redoubt had been erected upon it; but a large number of trenches had been dug there, which sheltered a very numerous infantry. The capture of this hill would give the Russians just the advantage they desired, and Skobelev made very complete arrangements for the attack to take place on the evening of the 9th November. Between 11,000 and 12,000 men were assigned for the purpose, amongst them being a strong body of sappers and miners. Large numbers of the other troops were also furnished with spades—the object being to storm the hill and at once secure it with defensive works.

In perfect silence large bodies of Russians were towards evening massed in Brestovec, and around

the Turkish position; and these having taken their appointed places, the attack on the intrenchments of the Green Hill began simultaneously from the southern, eastern, and western sides. So well were the several movements carried out, that the Turks were taken completely by surprise. The north-eastern slope was first scaled, and at length, after a brave defence, the hill itself was cleared of the Turks by a bayonet charge. Rifles were instantly exchanged for spades; the engineers hurried up to the front; and before the morning broke the Russians had turned the Turkish intrenchments to good account. Not only was the Green Hill made secure against an attack from the side of Plevna, but a smaller rocky eminence to the west was also seized and fortified, and a line of trenches constructed connecting the two points.

In the course of the day these hastily-executed works were completed and strengthened, and the artillery and mitrailleuse, which had been hurried up to the spot in the early dawn, had been placed in position. It was soon evident that Skobelev had not made his preparations a whit too early, for the Turks were by no means disposed to surrender the heights to the victors without another struggle. All through the 10th they kept up a fire on the Russians, and at night they twice attempted to carry the hill by assault, but were each time repulsed. On the following day and night, also, the attacks were renewed on one or two occasions in great force. Once, indeed, Skobelev's left was in such danger of being turned by a flank attack, that for a time the little rocky eminence referred to had to be given up. Concentrating, however, and throwing forward almost all his reserves, Skobelev's troops drove back the Turks in this, as in their other attacks, with considerable loss. After three days of incessant and gallant efforts to recover the lost ground the Turks desisted, and in the period of quiet which ensued they at once commenced erecting fresh redoubts—one of them being not more than 150 yards distant from the new Russian intrenchments.

The investing line was materially shortened by this capture, and, moreover, it gave access to a road which readily united Skobelev with Zotoff, and without which they were incapable of reinforcing each other, except by the roundabout way of Tucenica—as the impassable ravine of that name effectually separated the two sectors. The distance was now less than 1000 yards instead of

six or seven miles, and the strategic gain was very considerable. Skobelev himself, who had hitherto been supposed to lead a charmed life, was slightly wounded in directing the assault; but at the end of a few days he was able to resume his command.

The capture of the Green Hill formed the principal event of the siege of Plevna from the time of the completion of its investment on the 24th of October to its surrender; and the circle of environment was now drawn so closely around the doomed town as to cut it off from every means of communication with the outer world. After thus isolating it from all hope of assistance or supplies, the Russians became content to wait until the irresistible advance into Plevna of an enemy more powerful than themselves should give them Osman Pasha and his heroic army as prisoners of war.

The prospect was not a pleasant one for Osman himself, and it was even less so for the Military Council at Constantinople, who saw before them the speedy loss of their ablest general and bravest army. The dilemma was one for which the Council had chiefly themselves to blame; for had they been willing in the earliest part of the campaign to accept the advice of the commander of Plevna, the latter, instead of now being starved out, might at least have been effectually barring the advance of the Russians for a time, and compelling them to confine their operations through a whole winter to the north of the Balkans. Apparently awake at last, however, to the critical nature of the situation, the Council resolved to despatch an army of relief to Osman Pasha, under the command of Mehemet Ali. The resolution was taken when the disaster of Gorny-Dubnik and Telis, and the flight of Chefket Pasha to Orkhanie, became known. Mehemet Ali had just been removed, for supposed want of energy, from the command of the army of the Quadrilateral, and nominated to take charge of the forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The latter provinces were rightly regarded, however, for the time as of subordinate importance; and while on his way to Serajevo, to take up his new command, Mehemet Ali received a despatch informing him that he was placed at the head of the armies of Sophia and Orkhanie. Orders were at the same time issued to assemble, without delay, sufficient forces to free Plevna from its besieging army.

For some days there then ensued a general scrambling together and hurrying to the front of all the Moustaphiz and troops of every description, that could by any possibility be gathered from Constantinople and throughout Roumelia. Troops on their way to reinforce Suleiman Pasha, who had succeeded Mehemet Ali in command on the Danube and the Lom, were turned aside and marched off to the aid of Mehemet; shivering Arab regiments, and sturdy and faithful Asiatic regulars, crowded together with a preponderating horde of Circassians; while Chakir Pasha hurried up to the Balkans with the remains of a Bosnian division which had stood the fiery ordeal of the Shipka Pass. Many who came would have been better away, had the Commander-in-chief been able to select his men; but that was impossible, and the consequence was that the bulk of the army consisted of a rabble, hurried together with a view to numerical force alone, and without any regard to efficiency. Without unity or cohesion, ignorant of each other, composed to a great extent of conscripts, badly victualled, and without any staff—such an army constituted the poorest and most imperfect instrument of offence. There was no time, moreover, to instruct them. The time to have assembled a powerful army of relief was in September, when Osman Pasha asked for it, and not in November, when the golden opportunity was past, and Plevna was encircled with a formidable and impassable girdle.

There was no doubt, however, that Mehemet Ali would make the best use of the material at his disposal, and which it was supposed amounted to nearly 50,000 men, though in reality it never reached half that number. It became necessary, therefore, for the Russian Staff to take every precaution to guard the forces investing Plevna from an attack in the rear. Accordingly, not only were the Russian positions on the Vid fortified, but columns were pushed forward towards the hills to foil any attempt from that direction to advance towards Plevna. Already, in October, small bodies of Russian troops had cleared the whole country to the south-west of Plevna, and gained a few points on the northern slopes of the Etropol Balkans. But the strong position of Orkhanie gave Mehemet Ali a firm base of operation, and allowed him a free issue from the hills; and to shut this gate against him, it was necessary to assume the offensive, and

secure, if possible, the principal Passes through the mountains.

To carry out this plan a special army corps was formed from troops of the Guard, and placed under the command of General Gourko, who set out from the neighbourhood of Gorny-Dubnik along the Sophia road, and reaching Jablanitza, halted there for two days, whilst he sent out reconnaissances to obtain information of the enemy's whereabouts and strength. He was not long discovering him strongly posted at Provitz—a place difficult of access, and of considerable natural strength, on the east side of the road to Orkhanie. So strong, indeed, was the position that Gourko, feeling assured that a direct attack, unassisted by a flank movement, would end abortively, determined to employ both methods, and for this purpose detached from his main force General Rauch, with one regiment of the Guard, two battalions of rifles, a battery of horse artillery, and six squadrons of cavalry, ordering him to move on the left side of the road, up the little Isker.

Rauch started from Jablanitza on his dangerous enterprise on the 21st November, with orders to march all night; and as by the map the distance was only about twenty-four miles, it was expected he would arrive by noon next day in time to attack. The calculation proved entirely erroneous, through overlooking the peculiar nature of the country Rauch had to traverse. Instead of arriving at noon on the 22nd, he only reached his destination on the afternoon of the 23rd; and even then his march, considering the season and the natural difficulties encountered, was one of the finest achievements of the campaign. The column marched three hours only the first afternoon, and bivouacked from five until eight o'clock, when it moved again, continued to march the whole night, and reached Vidrar, a village on the Mali-Isker, at eight o'clock in the morning. At the first bivouac no fires were lighted, and the men ate their hard bread without soup or tea. The stay at Vidrar was very short, for it became apparent that the force would not arrive until long after it was expected, unless it pushed rapidly on. The paths from Vidrar, southwards, were all simple mountain tracks, over which probably no wheels had ever passed, and it became a matter of infinite difficulty to bring on the artillery, and especially the caissons with the ammunition. There were some 120 picks and shovels with the force, and a

corresponding number of men were detailed to clear the road and make it passable, working in two reliefs of sixty men each. The path led along a ravine where the Mali-Isker twisted and turned among the crags; and before they left the river to take the direction of the village of Kalugerovo, the next village on the route, they had crossed it ten times—each time with much trouble. The way led over great ledges of hard, flinty rock, full of seams and fissures, so difficult for the horses to pass that the feet of several were caught in the crevices and the hoofs torn from the bone. Horses were not too numerous, and it was impossible to proceed without them; the hoofless feet were therefore bound up in rags, and the poor beasts limped along dragging the heavy caissons and guns. The whole day of the 22nd they climbed along the mountain paths, step by step, not advancing much more than a mile an hour. The paths were often so narrow that artillery carriages could only pass with one wheel over the side, and only by partly suspending them with ropes were they kept from falling over the precipices. Three caissons full of ammunition went over in spite of all efforts to prevent the accident, and two horses were killed and one Cossack mortally wounded; the other men, who were with the caissons, scrambled up in time to save themselves. The men proposed to leave the remaining caissons, and to carry the powder and shells singly by hand; but this was, first, contrary to general orders, and, second, a proceeding evidently too dangerous to be permitted, and the efforts to bring forward the caissons were consequently renewed with redoubled energy, and with ultimate success.

What the men suffered on that long march it is impossible to fully describe. They had only their hard dry bread to eat, and they were accustomed to meat and plenty of it. Loaded with a heavy weight of ammunition, they drew themselves up from rock to rock with severe labour; for it must be remembered they were not mountaineers. On past the village of Kalugerovo, where they left two cannon for want of horses, they reached at last the village of Lakavica, near the river Pravecka, at nine o'clock in the evening. Having met ten of the enemy, a small party of Bashi-bazouks, on the road, they were obliged to take extraordinary precautions to keep silent; and finding it quite out of the question to proceed by the unexplored paths in the night, and through a dense fog which pre-

ailed, they decided to bivouac, lay down without fire, and slept in an instant. Two men died of fatigue on the spot; the rest were so worn out with want of sleep and severe exertions that they were like drunken men. Every one of the outposts was found by the officers who went the rounds to be dead asleep, and no scolding or threats could keep them awake, although they were in the very face of the enemy. The horses trembled all night, not from cold, but from overwork, and they threw themselves flat the moment they were taken from the traces. The night, chill as it was, seemed far too short to the exhausted men, and on the morning of the 23rd they worked their way on again, crossing the Pravecka, and following up the ravine to the right and southwards. A single mountain range, partly held by the Turks, now separated them from the plain of Orkhanie, and the end of their ascent seemed at hand. Suddenly came a sharp infantry fire upon the column from the heights along the ravine, where it made a turn around a mountain; and, though not completely surprised, there was, of course, a halt and a general fusillade. About 200 Kuban Cossacks who had already passed the point where the Turks were assembled, dismounted, left their horses, and climbed up the precipitous mountain side to get upon the flank of the enemy. At the same time two battalions worked their way up the crags, higher and higher towards the summit, until they looked like ants crawling along among the bushes and rocks. The Turks continued their fire, but shooting too high, they did little damage, only wounding two men and killing and wounding several horses. The appearance of the infantry in front, and the dismounted Cossacks on the flank, demoralized the Turks; and they fled, having delayed the advance of the column about two hours, the whole of which time a brisk fire was kept up from both sides. On then went the Russians as before, dragging, pushing, and pulling the cannon, and without further resistance gained the summit of the range in which was the Turkish position, in the middle of the afternoon. The men were almost completely exhausted, and it seemed as if nothing but the sight of the enemy could take them further on. There was no grumbling or unwillingness, but simple exhaustion—inability to march and climb any more. The officers took off their swords and revolvers and left them with the baggage, then led their troops in the direction of

the enemy's position, telling the men that they went against the Turks unarmed, in perfect confidence that no harm would come to them in the company of the brave soldiers who had accomplished so much and suffered so much in the last two days. The men thus led joined in an encouraging hurrah, and went merrily on.

In the meantime General Schouvaloff, who had been sent by Gourko to carry out the attack in front, had proceeded down the Sophia road, and on the 22nd took up his position before Provitz, where he waited for the appearance of Rauch. A brisk cannonade was opened upon the Turkish works both on the 22nd and 23rd; but of this little notice was taken, the defenders apparently being confident of the inability of Schouvaloff to secure any advantage by an assault. At last General Rauch debouched on the almost inaccessible flank of the Turkish position, and immediately engaged in the struggle. At the very moment at which the column arrived the Turks had just occupied a height on their left flank in order to stop the turning movement; but no time was given them to intrench themselves there. In spite of the fatigue of Rauch's men, and the rough march which they had just accomplished, they immediately ascended the height to the attack, overthrew their enemy, and pursued them from one position to another. The Turks, terror-stricken at seeing their position turned, gave up defending themselves and fled, pursued by a rain of shells from the batteries of Count Schouvaloff's columns, which had now advanced up from the front. Thus the redoubtable works of Provitz were captured, almost without bloodshed, since the Russians had only two officers wounded and seventy men killed or wounded. The flight of the Turks as they descended the hill was assisted by a thick fog, which hung about the lower part of the valley and hid them from their pursuers, and consequently only about fifty were taken prisoners.

The Russians could fairly congratulate themselves on a great and cheaply-purchased success; but their rejoicings were somewhat marred by the misfortunes of a column charged with effecting a diversion on the west and south-west of General Rauch. To guard against the possibility of troops from Orkhanie being sent to the reinforcement of Provitz, the cavalry from Vratza were ordered to effect a demonstration towards Novatchin, Lutikovo, and Skriveno. Two columns accordingly

set out, composed of cavalry and a battery of artillery, one marching to Novatchin, the other to Lutikovo. Owing, however, to a thick fog which prevailed at the time, the Novatchin detachment, consisting of about 170 men and three guns, passed the place by mistake, and shortly afterwards found itself surrounded and cut off by a large force of Turkish infantry and irregulars. With desperate courage they turned upon their assailants; but in fighting their way out of the dilemma more than half the detachment were killed and the three guns were lost. Two of the latter were thrown down a precipice, when their capture seemed imminent; while the Turks succeeded in taking the other, after cutting down every one of its defenders.

At the same time that Rauch and Schouvaloff started from Jablanitz (21st November) on the errand by which a brilliant and almost bloodless victory was obtained at Provitz, General Dandeville was also despatched by Gourko to carry out, at a few miles south-west of Provitz, a similar movement upon Etropol. There were two urgent reasons for General Gourko's wishing to occupy the town: and the same reasons had induced the Turks to defend it by posting a considerable force, under Mustapha Pasha, in the surrounding fortifications. In the first place, a bye road ran from Etropol to a point immediately south of Orkhanie; and this once in Russian possession, Orkhanie would be in the same unfortunate position as that in which Provitz had been placed—in other words, it would be so effectually turned that Chakir Pasha, who now held it, must inevitably retreat or surrender. In the second place, there still existed, commanded by the fortifications of Etropol, an old and disused path which ran across the Balkans to Sophia, *via* Slatitza; and by this defile Gourko could get across the Balkans parallel with Mehemet Ali, and take the Turkish General in the rear. There was thus the opportunity for two more of the series of flank attacks and turning movements which so distinguished this celebrated southward march of Gourko; and the scheme was conceived and carried out concurrently with the movement upon Provitz.

General Dandeville, commissioned with the taking of Etropol, divided his troops into two columns, one under Prince Alexander of Oldenburg, and the other under Colonel Rydzevsky. The former was to advance upon the north of

the Turkish position, sending, at the same time, a column to the east or left flank of Mustapha Pasha; while Rydzevsky was to attack upon his right flank and menace the rear. Difficulties much the same as those encountered by Rauch had to be overcome by both columns; and from the nature of the operations their success evidently depended more on the muscle and endurance of the soldiers than on their fighting qualities. The whole country to be traversed was of the most rugged and mountainous character, and every step in advance was gained only by hard climbing and great fatigue. The Turkish defences were mounted on heights, around the town, which were considered utterly inaccessible to an enemy. The Russians, however, contrived, unobserved, to carry their artillery to adjacent summits which commanded Mustapha Pasha's redoubts; while by a series of adroit manœuvres the Turks were deceived as to the extent of the Russian forces, and, believing them far greater than they really were, evacuated several important positions around the town, and concentrated into those chiefly dominated by their enemy's guns—a trap which might have been avoided but for the positive aversion to outpost duty so conspicuous in the Turks throughout the campaign. Several outlying works, however, had to be taken; but this was accomplished at comparatively trifling cost.

By the 23rd the Russians had overcome almost all obstacles, and taken up their positions according to arrangement around Etropol. With such precision, indeed, had this been accomplished, that fire was opened upon the Turks almost at the same moment from a line full twelve miles in length; and Mustapha Pasha, to his great surprise, suddenly found himself surrounded on two flanks by infantry, enfiladed and taken at the rear by artillery, and his communications menaced.

Our readers will have a better idea of the exact military situation at this time, as regards Mustapha Pasha, if we revert for a moment to the proceedings of Mehemet Ali, now Commander-in-chief over this district, and commissioned to "relieve," or in some undefined way to assist, Osman Pasha at Plevna. Unfortunately, the forces collected together and placed at his disposal for this purpose were, as we have already shown, not only few in number compared with the task before them, but for the most part wretchedly inefficient. Ascertaining this, and conscious of his

superiority of force, Gourko had resolved to strike out boldly before Mehemet Ali could arrange for any united action by his rather scattered and, in many respects, discordant forces.

Arriving at Sophia about the middle of November, Mehemet only remained to arrange some details of organization, and pushed on rapidly to Vrachesti, a village a few miles in the rear of Orkhanie, where he arrived on the 22nd, and at once proceeded to inspect the positions and arrange the plans for the projected advance on Plevna. The Pass of Orkhanie might easily have been rendered perfectly impenetrable to an enemy; but little thinking that the position would so soon be assailed, the Turkish General's arrangements were made providing more for an actual march forward than for standing here strongly on the defensive—many of the troops being advanced considerably beyond Orkhanie, and arranged in three lines. The first and most advanced line was posted at the entrance of a Pass through the hills near Orsikovo; the second close to the village of Jasan, or Lazhan; and the third at Orkhanie itself, where it would most conveniently hold the Orkhanie Pass.

On the 23rd November, the day after his arrival at Orkhanie, Mehemet Ali rode out with his Staff to a position in front of the first line; and away in the distance there was discovered, by the aid of glasses, the Russian advance-guard, occupying both sides of the Plevna road. The Russians threw some shells with great precision towards the Turkish position, and gave evident signs of coming on. The first line of Mehemet Ali was unfortunately composed of Moustaphiz, or native militia, who had none of the stamina and resolution of the regulars; and though for some hours they burned powder with great energy, whilst the enemy was quite out of range, they ran away at the first sign of the Russian advance, and inaugurated a panic. The ill-trained militia rushed in complete disorder to the second line of defence. Here Mehemet Ali for a little while attempted to make a stand and to restore confidence to his troops. The Russian General, however, discerning his advantage, sent large numbers of men through the now undefended opening of the Orsikovo Pass, and pressed on to the village of Jasan, not far from the second Turkish line. Upon this, the demoralization of the Turks was so complete, that it was evident this line could not be held. A regiment of Moustaphiz were vainly urged to advance from the third line

to the second, and Mehemet Ali reluctantly ordered Nassiz Bey to retire upon the final position of defence, immediately in front of Orkhanie. But the wildest disorder prevailed, and even here for some time no stand could be effected. Many of the troops rushed back into the town, spreading confusion and panic as they went, and the Circassians began their characteristic work of pillage and rapine. Ultimately, by the aid of some Bosnian Nizams, Chakir Pasha was able to check the stampede, and restore the line of defence in front of the town.

Disheartened as Mehemet Ali was by the miserable defection of his men, the cup of his troubles for the day was not yet quite filled. News came of the march of the Russians upon Etropol, and that the position of the town, which was almost surrounded, was critical. Mustapha Pasha, who held the command there, telegraphed for permission to evacuate and burn the place. Mehemet Ali sent back a guarded answer conveying no distinct order, but authorizing withdrawal in case of the appearance of absolutely overwhelming numbers. This proved sufficient authority for Mustapha, alarmed as he was at finding enemies on every side; and at eight o'clock on the morning of the 24th he made preparations for a "strategic movement" to the rear. He was not allowed to retire unmolested, and some sharp fighting took place in the effort to draw off his artillery and train. It was only towards evening that he succeeded in getting well on the road leading over the Balkans, which he eventually crossed, and reached Tahkesen in complete disorder. General Gourko entered Etropol the following day, November 25, and made the town his head-quarters for the time being.

We have already pointed out the value of the Etropol position as affecting that of Orkhanie, in the fact that an old road, still practicable for troops, led from one to the other, joining the main Sophia road a little to the rear of Orkhanie. While Gourko, with General Dandeville and Rydzewsky's column, entered Etropol, the column of Prince Alexander of Oldenburg gained the road we have referred to, and pushed swiftly on. Chakir Pasha, now holding Orkhanie with the troops who had fled before the Russian advanced guard on the 23rd, was not slow to see the danger of remaining there. With Schouvaloff advancing in front and Prince Alexander on his rear his position was utterly untenable, and on the 25th he with-

drew, abandoning immense magazines of cartridges and stores of provisions and clothing.

At Vrachesti, four or five miles to the rear of Orkhanie, Chakir Pasha halted, with the intention of holding the place if possible. The Russians, however, under Schouvaloff, came on to Orkhanie in great force, while Dandeville, elate with the success of his flank march from Etropol, found a way of menacing the unfortunate Chakir Pasha's rear even at Vrachesti. The Turks, therefore, found themselves forced to abandon this position, and on the 29th retired to the high Pass of Baba Konak, where strong defensive works had been constructed extending on both sides of the road.

On the right side of the Pass, looking towards Etropol, there was a succession of redoubts, six in number, and rising ridge on ridge until they culminated in a point known as the Yildiz redoubt—5000 feet above the sea. This lofty ridge, in the midst of a lonely mountainous district, was the key of the Turkish position. Advancing rapidly on the 30th, the Russians were successful in seizing a very advantageous position, which had been left unguarded, and from which they were able to threaten the Yildiz redoubt—thus neutralizing the fire of all the other and lower redoubts. An attempt, however, by the Russians on the 1st December to carry the Yildiz by storm was repulsed with the loss of more than 300 men; but on the 4th December, owing to another of the skilful turning movements now characteristic of Gourko's columns, the Turks had to entirely abandon Baba Konak, and fall back to a strong position at Kamarli, south of the main ridge of the mountains. The flanking movement was this time effected by a detachment from Etropol, commanded by General Kournakoff, who pushed his way up across the Balkans through the defile to Slatitza, and thence to the rear of Baba Konak. On the retirement of the Turks the important Baba Konak Pass was at once occupied by General Schouvaloff's detachment, while General Gourko, on December 7, took up his head-quarters in Orkhanie. In this position his force was ordered to halt until reinforced by men from around Plevna, the surrender of which was at that time hourly expected.

Thus far General Gourko's campaign had been a series of interesting and cleverly executed movements, which had enabled him to advance without serious check to within a day's ride of Sophia, and

to occupy strong positions in the most important Pass of this part of the Balkan range. The losses of his whole force were only about 500 all told—his success having been won by flanking movements, depending more on the endurance and marching power of the troops than upon their fighting qualities. The achievements of Rauch's column were, on a somewhat less important scale, continually repeated. Heights were climbed, ravines crossed, and dense forests penetrated by the Russians with artillery, that had seemed to the Turks, and with reason, to be the impregnable natural bulwarks of their chosen positions. They left these points unguarded because apparently inaccessible, and the Russians found there just the foothold needed to grapple with their enemy or to threaten to drive him out of his strongholds. The Turks having in this way been forced back across the main ridge of the Balkans, all hope of succour must by this time have died out in the mind of the most sanguine within Plevna. The stores of provisions there were wofully diminishing, and the fatal moment when resistance would be no longer possible was rapidly approaching.

After the completion of the Russian works under General Todleben, a bombardment of the town took place at regular hours every day—morning, afternoon, and evening. As the town contained but few troops—they being nearly all in the fortifications and trenches—the sick, the wounded, and the Bulgarian population were the chief sufferers from this bombardment. At first the losses being small, no one took shelter; but when women were struck down, and sick soldiers were killed in the rooms in which they lay, most of the inhabitants took fright, and fled for shelter to the churches. The women were the first to go and instal their children there. Mattresses and coverlets were also carried there, and even the meals were taken in the holy place. Where once the smoke of incense rose, now steamed the soup. These masses of humanity, crowded together for shelter from the bombs, were indeed a sad sight; but the aspect of the churches, especially at night when a thousand candles illuminated the nave and twinkled round the sides, was picturesque in the extreme.

Many of the Turkish families had left the town, carrying off everything they could in their arabas; and the last convoy of these poor people, stopped by the investment of Dolny-Dubnik, had

retired as far as the bridge over the Vid, and hoping that every fresh moment would bring some chance of escape, camped there in the open. These families were perhaps the greatest sufferers during the two months and a half of the siege.

In the beginning of November the weather became bitterly cold, and wood ran short. In order to keep themselves warm in the trenches during the night, and to cook their meals during the day, the soldiers tore up with the pick-axe all the vines on the slopes, and carried them into the tabias. All round Plevna for miles the vineyards were thus completely uprooted. The ration of the soldiers consisted of rather less than a pound of bread, half wheat and half maize; and about half-a-pound of beef, but of wretched quality. For a long time there was neither tea nor coffee for the troops. As the siege dragged on, provisions became more and more scarce, and prices increased enormously. Tobacco failed first, then sugar, and then meat. At one time sugar fetched ten shillings a pound. Flour, also, could only be obtained with the greatest difficulty after the middle of November.

Had the soldiers been well equipped they would have suffered much less from their trying work in the trenches, spite of the scarcity of provisions. But clothes also ran short. Some weeks before the investment, the military administration purchased large quantities of sheep skins in Sophia and the neighbouring villages, to be made up into warm winter clothing; but none of them ever reached Plevna.

The strength of the blockaded army not much exceeding 50,000 men, and the line of defences to be held being very extensive, the labours became each day more severe, as the effective of the troops gradually decreased. The soldiers alternately spent two days and two nights in the most threatened redoubts—that near Grivica, for instance; and on leaving these formidable trenches, took a post less dangerous, perhaps, but in which they could scarcely get any rest.

From the first days of November the Russians made two or three attempts to obtain the surrender of Plevna by diplomatic measures, the first effort being a letter from the Grand-duke Nicholas, which was sent from the Russian head-quarters to Osman Pasha. It was intrusted to three Turkish prisoners, who were set at liberty for the purpose. The letter explained to the Pasha the consequences of the capture of Gorny-Dubnik, Telis, Teteven,

and Vratza; announced the arrival of the Guards and of other large reinforcements to the army which invested Plevna, and the consequent desperate situation of the town; and concluded by inviting him to surrender. Osman Pasha's reply was received two days afterwards, brought by a *parlementaire*, and in it he refused to surrender, whatever the state of affairs.

A few days afterwards five other Turkish prisoners were sent into Plevna, with four numbers of the *Times* and two of the *Daily News*, which contained the news of the complete defeat of the Turkish army in Asia. From the numerous papers received at the Russian head-quarters the leading English journals were purposely chosen, in order that the Pasha might have no doubt as to the authenticity of the news. In addition to the telegrams from Asia, the journals contained announcements to the effect that Suleiman Pasha had found it impossible to advance in Eastern Bulgaria; and despatches from Reouf Pasha at Shipka stating that the snow had fallen for the previous three days, and had put an end for a time to all military operations. The packet with these dismal tidings was addressed to his Excellency Osman Pasha, from General Gourko; but no reply was received.

On the 13th November a *parlementaire* was again sent to Plevna, with a second letter from the Grand-duke. It informed Osman Pasha that he was completely surrounded, and begged him in the name of humanity "to give up resistance and the useless shedding of blood." The answer arrived the next day, and it was as categorically negative as the first—"I recognize," said the Turkish General, "the motives of humanity which have prompted the invitation addressed to me; but I do not consider that I have yet exhausted all the means of resistance which my situation commands me to employ."

On the 19th November, however, there arrived at the Russian advance-posts at the Green Mountain a Turkish *parlementaire*, who proved to be the bearer of a letter from Osman Pasha for the Grand-duke Nicholas. Osman Pasha expressed his readiness to surrender, but only on condition that he should leave the town "with all the honours of war," and that his army should retire, without arms, either on Sophia or on Widdin, at the option of the Pasha. After a short deliberation the Council of the Grand-duke declared unanimously that the pro-

position could not be entertained, more especially as the capitulation of the army of Plevna, without any conditions, was now only a question of time. After this no further communications took place between the two Commanders-in-chief. Osman Pasha prepared himself to resist to his last piece of bread, and the Grand-duke Nicholas to wait until famine should give him the stronghold which his army in its thrice repeated efforts had failed to take.

On November 20 Skobelev, determined apparently that the Grand-duke Michael's great victory in Asia should be generally known in Plevna, erected a large transparent screen, exhibiting very conspicuously to the Turks the announcement that Kars had fallen. The unwelcome placard was not, however, allowed to remain long intact, being soon torn to shreds by the well-aimed missiles of the besieged Moslems.

With a man of such energy as Osman Pasha, it was considered that some supreme effort to break through the lines of investment was almost certain to be attempted. General Todleben, accordingly, distributed to the chiefs of the various sections an approximate estimate of the sorties which Osman Pasha might attempt, and a plan for the most speedy concentration of troops on any particular point. During the first days of December he also caused various movements to be executed under his own supervision, in the sections of Generals Ganetsky and Kataley, in order to be able to calculate exactly the time necessary for the concentration of troops in the event of an energetic attack by the invested army.

At last, on the 9th December, it could no longer be doubted that the last act of the drama of Plevna was about to be played. The fire of the Turkish artillery, which for several days had notably decreased, became entirely silent. Some spies and deserters informed the Russians that Osman had distributed to his troops three days' rations, 150 cartridges, and a pair of sandals to each man, and that he had made an inspection of their arms. The peculiarities of the ground enabled the Russians to see every part of the Turkish positions from some point on the besieging circle; and by this means, on the 9th December, a great movement was noticed near the town on the Sophia road, while in the fields was seen a large concentration of troops and waggons. From all these signs it was naturally inferred that Osman was preparing for a sortie, and that his principal effort would probably be

directed against General Ganetsky's section. This inference proved correct. Osman Pasha had determined to attempt to cut a passage through the Russian lines—having reached the extreme limit of resistance of which human strength was capable. He had only provisions for a week, the limited rations were telling badly upon the *morale* of his men; while the ravages of typhus fever, which had broken out with fearful violence, threatened to destroy all the inhabitants of Plevna in a few days, and the army with them. When the thousands of corpses lying unburied around the town, and the state of the hospitals and of the sick and wounded, as well as the privations to which the inhabitants were subject, are considered, it seems astonishing that this terrible malady had not appeared long before.

The Turkish General commenced his preparations on the night of the 7th December, when a bridge was thrown across the Vid, at the side of a stone bridge already existing, in order to concentrate the troops more rapidly on the left bank of the river; the large guns in position were spiked, the ammunition was buried, and trenches for communication were dug between several of the redoubts, in order to be able to advance troops without giving any alarm to the enemy. The sick and wounded were left at Plevna, with the exception of those who could march and hold a gun; these latter were armed and incorporated with the troops. The doctors and the infirmiry nurses joined with the army, so that, as we shall see further on, nearly 4000 unfortunates remained for more than three days completely abandoned in the hospitals and ambulances of Plevna, and large numbers perished.

On the night of the 9th the Roumanians north of Plevna noticed many lights moving about in the town—a most unusual sight—and soon the electric wire made this fact known. In great suspense the night wore slowly away, the Russians looking out if they might discover anything more through the storm of sleet that drove past them; and during all these hours Osman Pasha was steadily withdrawing all his forces towards the western side of the Vid, preparatory to making his final attempt to escape from the toils that surrounded him on every side. Remembering the great disadvantages he laboured under, through every movement being made known to his enemies by Bulgarian deserters, it says a great deal for his

adroitness on this occasion that the ever-watchful Skobelev was not aware until about four in the morning that the redoubts before him were abandoned. At half-past three a deserter brought in this intelligence, and when asked if he would consent to guide a detachment up to the redoubts which he said were abandoned, at the risk of being shot if he did not tell the truth, he at once consented; and Skobelev sent a handful of volunteers to reconnoitre. The reconnaissance, with rifles slung, stealthily approached the Turkish trenches and listened; nothing, however, broke the dead silence; not a voice nor a sound could be heard, nor anything which betrayed the presence of man. The Russians advanced to the very ridge of the trench, and discovered that it was empty; they then pushed forward and peered into the shelters one after the other, and found them also deserted. It was evident that the whole trench was abandoned. The scouts then advanced towards the Krisin redoubt. As far as could be judged by the ear, men were still busy there, but were leaving the work and taking away the guns. Steps and voices were heard on the path which led to the road, wheels creaked in the distance; but on the whole line not a single indication of any life was to be seen, save the fires kindled and left burning to deceive the enemy as to the evacuation that was taking place.

The reconnoitring party returned to General Skobelev, who immediately informed the Grand-duke Nicholas at Bogot, and General Todleben at Tucenica by telegraph. The latter, by the same means, hastened to advise General Ganetsky.

On receipt of the telegram from General Todleben, Ganetsky gave orders to all the troops beyond the Vid to hold themselves ready. The advance-posts of the cavalry surrounded all the country beyond the river, and a part even held themselves ready near the stone bridge on the Sophia road. The night was so dark and foggy that the eye could not distinguish anything. The advanced guards, nevertheless, watched attentively; and it is worthy of record, that during the whole of the night they fired not a single shot, although several of them approached almost close to the Turks—being unwilling to give the alarm prematurely. From time to time they sent reports to General Ganetsky, which all stated that on the right bank of the Vid (occupied by the Turks) long convoys could be heard marching;

that some teams were descending the heights on the bank; and that a dull hollow noise, produced by a large number of men and animals, could be heard, but no fires were anywhere to be seen.

The tardy dawn of a winter's day, and a thick fog, did not for some time permit of what was passing beyond the bridge being clearly observed; but at last a slight hail-storm dissipated the fog, and the sky cleared towards the east. The vast plain situated between the Opanetz and Tirnen heights then lay exposed before the Russian advance-posts, and all this plain and the slopes of the neighbouring heights were observed to be covered with men and equipages. The grenadiers had before them the whole of Osman Pasha's army. At eight o'clock in the morning thick masses of Turkish infantry descended the heights, and extended out rapidly to the bridges. The advanced guards fell back immediately on their intrenchments, and informed General Ganetsky of the movement of the enemy. As soon as the Russian General received this information a rocket, as a signal, was sent into the air, and along the whole line the drummers beat the alarm. The grenadiers ran to arms, and in less than ten minutes the columns were formed.

Osman Pasha's plan and order of battle were exceedingly simple. He intended to break away, if possible, not upon the Sophia road, but upon one branching from it to the north-east just across the Vid; it continued in the same direction to the Isker, thence westward to Kujasha, and there bifurcated towards Rahova and Milkovatz; and for this latter place Osman Pasha intended making. He had divided his troops into two nearly equal parts: about 20,000 men were commissioned to effect a passage by attacking the Russian intrenchments about two miles from the Vid. Thick lines of skirmishers marched in advance; some deployed battalions followed immediately; while on the heels of these were held the reserves, ready to assist at the point where the Russian lines appeared to break. With the reserves—and to a great extent sheltering them—came more than 500 waggons loaded with provisions and *matériel*. Another corps of 20,000 men remained on the banks of the Vid, with the order to advance only two hours after the commencement of the fight. The portion of the Turkish army thus left were to keep in check, on the right and left, the Russian troops which might otherwise close in upon and

surround the first corps. Osman Pasha subsequently regretted having prescribed to them so long a delay, and expressed the opinion that, if they had marched one hour after the commencement of the action, his sortie would have succeeded.

The Turks now rapidly formed their line of battle in the plain beyond the Vid, and threw themselves forward without taking the trouble to prepare their attack by cannonading the Russian positions. Their guns, erected on the heights near the bridge, had only time to fire a few rounds—so impetuous was the attack—before many of the Turks were in such close proximity to their enemies that further firing would have injured friend and foe alike. Under the fire of musketry from the Russian trenches, which were vomiting a storm of bullets, and under the furious volleys of the heavier Russian artillery of the first line, which overwhelmed them with shrapnel and grape, the heroes of Plevna advanced in silence with fixed bayonets and at double quick time. Inured by the incessant dangers of their long struggle, these troops had evidently become some of the firmest in the world; and their famous march of two miles under a fierce and well-directed fire, without sending a single shot in return, may well be regarded as an exploit which could not be surpassed. The attack was conducted by Osman Pasha in person, who rode at the head of his troops on a superb chestnut stallion, a present from the Sultan. In less than three-quarters of an hour the Turks were before the trenches, and at once threw themselves, with shouts of Allah! on the Siberian grenadiers. So fierce and overwhelming was the Turkish onslaught, that whole companies of the grenadiers were literally annihilated. Simple as was the duty of these devoted Muscovites—that of holding the advanced trenches—their conduct formed one of the finest and most stirring events of the whole war. In the face of the masses of advancing Turks death appeared certain. Not one of them, however, left the trench; all fought and fell there under the Turkish bayonets, and next day their bodies were found mixed with those of their enemies, clasped as in the last deadly struggle. They died, but not in vain; for their gallant stand insured a more speedy victory to their comrades, who were thus afforded some additional time to concentrate, in order to repel the sortie. After having taken possession of the first trench, the Turks advanced

on an earthwork situated between the first and second trenches, and armed with eight field pieces. The majority of the artillerymen were killed at their guns, and the battery was captured with the same fury as the first trench.

The first of the Russian lines was now broken; it was half-past eight in the morning, and at this moment Osman Pasha perceived the mistake that he had committed in not having ordered the corps he had left on the Vid to march earlier. With all his forces in hand, he might possibly have cut his way through for some distance by main force. As it was, he continued his progress, and in a few minutes afterwards his troops reached the second line of Russian trenches. Here was found a second earthwork battery, armed like the preceding with eight pieces of artillery; and the intrepid Nizams again drove off or killed the defenders, capturing two fresh guns.

The Turkish advance, for some unaccountable reason, now stopped. Whether due to the Moslems being too easily satisfied with the conquest of the trenches and battery, or whether the impetus of the attack had been partially exhausted in the shock which had overthrown the Siberian regiment, there was at all events a pause. The Russians themselves were not a little astonished, for, alarmed at the determined character of the attack upon their centre, General Stroukoff had been despatched to bring up in haste the 2nd Division of grenadiers. With their arrival the Russians rallied, and the reinforcements totally changed the aspect of the battle, and rendered it impossible for Osman Pasha to succeed any further in his attempt at forcing his way through. The new troops with a loud cheer threw themselves furiously upon the Turks, and a hand-to-hand fight ensued, man to man, bayonet to bayonet—the late defenders of Plevna clinging to the captured guns with dogged obstinacy. They seemed to forget, in the fury of battle, that they had come out to escape from Plevna, and not to take and hold a battery; and they held on to the guns with almost the same desperation as the Russian dead around them had shown a little while before. A dreadful scene of carnage was the result; for the Russians now came on with the same impetuosity and overwhelming numbers by which the Turks had annihilated the Siberian grenadiers. Not only were the guns which the latter regiment had lost retaken, but the leading trenches were recaptured; and there were

seized in addition seven of the guns the Turks had brought on to the left bank of the Vid, as well as a flag, and numerous artillery caissons, amongst which were found several of the Russian caissons lost during the battle of the preceding 20th July.

Whilst this was passing, the Samogitie grenadiers debouched into the space between Gorny and Dolny Mitropol. Attacking the Turks with the bayonet, they drove them from the flanking trenches without firing a single shot, and having put them to flight, obtained possession of three guns.

After the Russians had thus reconquered their advanced lines, the two armies kept up a heavy and destructive fire upon each other at from 200 to 300 yards distance, but without attempting to advance. Osman was waiting for the portion of his army he had left on the Vid, and General Ganetsky for the arrival of the 3rd Division of grenadiers and of the 16th Division of infantry. These were the troops under General Skobelev's command, but for once the 16th Division and its brilliant leader were absent from the thickest of the fray. They had been directed early in the morning to Dolny-Dubnik, where further orders reached them to advance up the Sophia road and hem in the left flank of the Turks. The movements were carried out with all the accustomed vigour of General Skobelev; but a misunderstanding of orders occurred which caused the Division to halt at least a couple of hours, and it ultimately only reached the stone bridge over the Vid when the battle was over.

Unaware of the delay or of its cause, Ganetsky waited impatiently for the aid which would enable him to push on with impunity, in spite of the 20,000 Turks who, in accordance with the arrangement of their General, might presently be upon the scene. Bitterly did Osman at this moment regret his unfortunate order; for if he could thus hold his triumphant enemy at bay with the shattered remains of the first half of his army, what might have been accomplished with the full strength of his forces?

Whilst both commanders thus waited, eagerly looking for their respective supports, an unexpected event quickly put an end to this state of suspense, and destroyed the last lingering hope of the Turks. Osman Pasha's horse was killed under him, and the General himself was wounded by a bullet which went right through the calf of his leg. The news of this wound, at first appre-

hended to be very serious on account of the fall of his horse, spread rapidly through the ranks of his army, and it was even said that he was already dead. It was then seen what influence such an event can exercise upon an army, when upheld so largely by the moral force and authority of its leader. The same battalions, which an hour before threw themselves with frenzy upon the Russian trenches, fell back in disorder upon the Vid, as soon as the news of the death of their commander spread through their ranks.

Profiting by the alarm, the Russians commenced a vigorous attack along their whole line. There then occurred a scene of panic and disorder so terrible, that it would be necessary to go back to the campaign in 1812, in Russia, to find anything to compare with it. All the Turkish inhabitants of Plevna, on learning the departure of their army, had hastened to place their most valuable possessions on carts, and had taken the Sophia road in the train of Osman. There were, consequently, at the rear of the Turks, 200 or 300 arabas loaded with old men, women, and children; and when returning towards the Vid, the panic-stricken army came upon them like a torrent. They overturned a great number, and this, in the midst of the avalanche of bullets and shells which were falling, and the cries of despair, produced a scene of indescribable confusion.

Whilst the tremendous struggle was going on upon the left bank of the Vid between the grenadiers and the Turkish army, the other troops of the army of investment, under the command of Zotoff, Krudener, Kataley, and Schnitnikoff, and General Cernat, who commanded the Roumanian Corps, advanced against the Turkish fortifications on the east, north, and south. The greater part of these works were already evacuated, and the troops occupied the town of Plevna in the presence of the Grand-duke Nicholas. The Emperor, informed of what was going on early in the morning at Gorny-Studen, arrived at Radisovo about noon; and from a commanding position close to Plevna, he was able to see his army penetrate into the town under the fortifications of which he had just passed three months of inquietude and anxiety. Despatches came in every moment, and were handed to His Majesty as fast as received, while the whole suite hung breathlessly upon the various announcements made in these winged messages from all parts of the line of circumvallation.

At nine o'clock in the morning the Roumanian troops, accompanied by Prince Charles, entered the second Grivica redoubt, which had been abandoned like those of Krisin, but encountered some resistance at the Opanetz redoubts, which were still occupied by the Turks. After a fight of short duration, the garrison of those works threw down their arms, and the Roumanians captured three guns and 2000 prisoners. General Kataley, on his side, had to fight for the possession of the three redoubts before him, and on capturing them he secured one pasha, 120 officers, 3734 men, and four guns. When they had occupied the town and all its fortified works, the united Russian and Roumanian troops, at the head of which the Grand-duke Nicholas now placed himself, continued to advance in the direction of the Vid on the rear of the Turkish army, and concentrated themselves by degrees on the heights to the west of Plevna, near the Sophia road.

Practically the Turkish sortie had been repulsed about ten o'clock in the morning, but the battle raged fully three hours longer. The Russians, who, as we have seen, had advanced on observing the sudden confusion of the Turks immediately before them, found themselves checked on nearing the Vid, not far from which were the thousands of fresh troops for whom Osman Pasha had vainly longed, and who now found their advance retarded by the retreat of their comrades. Stopped in their pursuit by coming within reach of the other half of Osman Pasha's army, the Russians nevertheless continued to pour in upon the Turks an incessant storm of shot and shell, while the Moslems held their ground and replied with a fire almost equally fierce. For nearly three hours the deadly storm swept on, as 150 guns sent forth their flame and smoke and iron—while each army was in momentary expectation of seeing its opponent again rush to the charge. It was a strangely impressive spectacle. To the rear of the Russians was the plain stretching away to the horizon, dark and sombre, under the dull, lead-coloured clouds of the bleak December day; in front the tunnel-like gorge leading up to Plevna, flanked on either side by high steep cliffs, and between them the smoke and roar and fire of battle filling the air with its awful thunder—a battle on which hung the fate, not of Plevna, the long-beleaguered town being already in the hands of the Russians, but of Osman Pasha and his army.

About one o'clock the firing began to diminish on both sides, as if by mutual agreement. Then it stopped entirely. The rolling crash of the infantry and the deep-toned bellowing of the artillery were heard no more. The smoke lifted, and there was silence—a silence not to be broken here for many a long year, perhaps never again, by the sounds of battle. The Turks began to comprehend the nature of their situation. They had not only failed to pierce the enemy's lines around them, but the Russians behind them had taken possession of Plevna and all its fortifications; they were hemmed in on the bank of the Vid, on ground where they could no longer deploy, and their leader was wounded. To continue the struggle with the fast accumulating enemy on every side would expose them to a totally annihilating convergent fire. All that human valour could accomplish had been done to save the garrison of Plevna, and nothing remained for the heroic army but to lay down its arms and surrender to its victorious adversary. Amid the smoke of battle and the groans of the dying, the curtain thus fell upon the last act of the Plevna tragedy, the prolonged agony of which had rivetted the attention of Europe for nearly six anxious months.

Almost immediately after the firing ceased a white flag was seen waving from the road leading around the cliffs beyond the bridge. Plevna had fallen, and Osman Pasha was going to surrender! An immense cheer was raised by the Russians who had approached the river, and the shout, taken up by the men behind and re-echoed by the cliffs around, was in singular contrast to the noise of battle which had filled the air just before. Very soon a Turkish officer was seen crossing the bridge on horseback, holding a *parlementaire's* flag in his hand. His eyes were bandaged, and he was led into the advanced lines; but General Ganetsky refused to receive him on learning that he was only an officer of inferior rank, and gave orders for him to be reconducted as far as the bridge. A quarter of an hour afterwards another *parlementaire* arrived, who was likewise refused; and as he only spoke Turkish, General Ganetsky requested General Stroukoff to give him a message written in French, addressed to Osman Pasha, which ran thus:—"Excellency, General Ganetsky, who commands here, begs me to inform you that he will only receive for *pourparlers* a person able to

represent you personally, for he knows that you are wounded." With this note the messenger departed.

Soon afterwards General Skobelev, preceding his division, arrived at the bridge with his Staff. The last of the fighting around Plevna, in which the young general had played so distinguished a part, was evidently over; and with his retinue of thirty or forty horsemen Skobelev rode down towards the bridge, within point-blank range of the rifles of the Turkish soldiers grouped in masses on the road behind the bridge. About fifty yards from the bridge, and scarcely a hundred from some masses of Turks on the other side, he halted, and two or three other officers waved white handkerchiefs—a signal of amity which was answered by the waving of a piece of white muslin, about two yards square, attached to a flag-staff. Then two horsemen came forward along the bridge, each carrying a white flag. There was a moment's conversation with General Skobelev's interpreter, when it was announced that Osman himself was coming out, and the two horsemen galloped back.

There was a curious reaction of feeling amongst the Russian officers on learning so unexpectedly that they were now to meet the antagonist who so long defied their most strenuous attacks. In the gallant spirit of true chivalry, there was heard nothing but eulogy and expressions of admiration at Osman's heroic defence. "He is the greatest general of the age," said Skobelev, "for he has saved the honour of his country. I will proffer him my hand and tell him so."

Skobelev was accompanied by the gifted and enterprising correspondent of the *Daily News*. Within a few months of the surrender of Plevna Mr. MacGahan, the correspondent to whom we refer, fell a victim to typhus fever whilst in Constantinople, and General Skobelev, who valued his friendship very highly, was one of his chief mourners. Mr. MacGahan's graphic description of the scene as Skobelev and his Staff approached the bridge across the Vid just prior to this, the most memorable surrender during the war, is of historic interest:—

"All around the ground was covered with grim relics of battle. Here and there the earth was upturned by the explosion of shells. Near this lay a horse groaning and struggling in death. Close by an ox, silently bleeding to death; his great,

round, patient eyes looking mournfully about. Just before was a cart with a dead horse lying in yoke as he had fallen, and a Turkish soldier lying alongside whose head had been carried away. Another man was lying under the waggon, and around were four wounded men, lying gazing up at the murky sky, or covered up with the hood of their ragged grey overcoat drawn over their faces. Not one of them uttered a sound. They lay there and bore their suffering with calm, stolid fortitude. Just behind the waggon the ground was ripped to pieces by shell-fire, telling how these unfortunates met their fate. The road and its edges were dotted here and there with dead and wounded Turkish soldiers, oxen, horses, and shattered carts; and a few hundred yards north of the road, the ground over which Osman Pasha's sallying column had made that heroic charge was literally covered with dead and wounded. Russian doctors were already going about on the field looking after the wounded, and giving them temporary dressing, while waiting for the ambulances to come up."

That Osman Pasha should himself come out to arrange the surrender, as was at this moment to be expected, was impossible on account of his wound. On receiving Ganetsky's note, therefore, he sent Tevfik Pasha, his chief of the Staff, who replying to questions from General Stroukoff, stated that the Turkish army surrendered, and Osman Pasha also; but as the latter, on account of his wound, was unable to come himself, and as he was unwilling to intrust the important duty of the surrender of the army to any one, he very much wished that General Ganetsky would have the goodness to come and see him in the little house to which he had been carried.

An aide-de-camp was immediately sent with this message to General Ganetsky. It was only a short time before this conversation that orders to cease fire had been given by the Russians. The Turks also had quite ceased fire; but it was an anxious moment, and men's nerves were all at their highest tension: for every one knew that if even an accidental shot should be fired, the struggle would recommence immediately, and become still more bloody and obstinate than before.

General Ganetsky appeared possessed with the same idea, for rapidly approaching the bridge, he simply said to Stroukoff, pointing at the same time to the guard-house, "Go!" The young officer at

once put spurs to his horse and dashed off along the road, near which were lying the dead and wounded. Masses of Turkish soldiers still armed, but sullen and silent, were on the bridge, on the road, on the parapets of the batteries, and the slopes of the hills; while at this moment, after having passed the fortifications of Krisin, Skobelev's 16th Division and the 3rd brigade of the Guard were seen approaching.

Passing through the midst of the crowd of Turkish soldiers, and obliged to make detours in order to avoid the killed and wounded, General Stroukoff approached the guard-house, around which was a crowd of officers, beys, pashas, doctors with the brassard of the Red Crescent, and Osman Pasha's aides-de-camp. This house, henceforth historical, was a little tile-covered loam hut, standing on the slope of a hill, and protected by one of the parapets forming the defence of the bridge. Throwing the bridle of his horse to his orderly Cossack, Stroukoff entered the house and soon found himself in front of three doors—one opening into a stable full of wounded, another in which stood a number of officers conversing in a subdued tone, while in the third, a little wretched room—smoked rather than warmed by a small grate on the right of the entrance, and dimly lighted by two small windows—was Osman Pasha seated on a wooden bench, his wounded leg resting on an empty tin cartridge box. His face was pale, his eyebrows bent, and his small brown eyes had an expression which showed both extraordinary intelligence and calmness. Near him was his surgeon, Hassib Bey, who was attending to his wound; and against the wall of the room stood some elderly pashas, whose appearance betokened respect and sorrow.

At General Stroukoff's entrance Osman rose with difficulty, made him the Oriental salute, and first extended his hand. "You are wounded, I beg you to remain seated, General!" Stroukoff hastened to say, assisting him to sit down; after which he stated to him his name and rank. Osman Pasha invited him to take a seat; but General Stroukoff, with military etiquette, continued the conversation standing. "I come here," said Stroukoff, "by order of General Ganetsky, to congratulate your Excellency on your brilliant attack, and at the same time to inform you that General Ganetsky, having received no order from his Imperial Highness, the Commander-in-chief,

can only offer you a surrender without conditions for you and your whole army."

Osman Pasha listened quietly, and after a few minutes of deep thought slowly lifted his head, and remarked to his surgeon with a kind of fatalistic resignation, "One day follows another, but no two days are alike; one brings success, another misfortune." Then turning towards Stroukoff he added, with a suppressed sigh and a slight bow, "I submit myself entirely to the wishes of the Commander-in-chief of your army." "Pasha," observed Stroukoff, "all is in the hands of God."

Half an hour afterwards General Ganetsky arrived. Entering the room where Osman was, the Commander of the corps of the Vid took off his cap and stretched out his hand to his adversary with the frankness of an old soldier. "I congratulate you; your attack was magnificent! Give, I beg you, the order to your men to lay down their arms!" Stroukoff then sat down by Osman Pasha's side. A minute of profound silence followed; the two generals seemed as if they were mutually studying each other. None of the Pashas present ventured to give the order demanded by Ganetsky; no one being willing to pronounce the last fatal word.

"Excellency," said Stroukoff, looking at his watch and addressing himself to Ganetsky, "it is already after four o'clock, it will be too late—would you not repeat your request?" Ganetsky's request was repeated by the interpreter, upon which Osman Pasha made a sign to Adil Pasha, who saluted him respectfully, and went out followed by Stroukoff. Then Osman, as if he had regained his spirits, suddenly took off his sabre, looked at it a moment as if bidding it adieu, and delivered it to General Ganetsky.

Adil Pasha went to the top of a hill, and, like a mollah on the summit of his minaret calling on the faithful to pray, said something, accompanied by gesticulations, to the troops, directing them to lay down their arms. There was a moment of mute protest; the soldiers remained perfectly motionless. They heard the shouts of the venerable Adil, but it was not till their officers had set them the example, and explained to them the folly of further resistance, that they complied with the order. Even then many did so slowly and unwillingly; they threw their rifles angrily on the ground, tore off their cartridge-pouches, and,

content to risk explosions, stamped on the cartridges until all the powder had run out.

During these proceedings the Russian troops, now in dense masses on every side, approached closer and closer to the Turks, until the latter were so completely and closely surrounded as to realize very forcibly the fact that they were prisoners of war.

About five o'clock in the evening Generals Skobelev and Ganetsky returned to the other side of the Vid to await the Grand-duke Nicholas, who shortly after arrived on the ground where the last fighting had taken place. Here large numbers of the victorious army were drawn up; and halting before the remains of the gallant Siberian regiment of grenadiers, he congratulated the troops upon their brilliant victory, thanked them for their exertions and the heroic courage of which they had given proof, and at last, raising his cap, gave the signal for a ringing cheer in honour of the Emperor.

Osman Pasha was at this time proceeding in a carriage to Plevna from the guard-house where the surrender had taken place; and half way between the bridge of the Vid and Plevna he was overtaken by the Grand-duke. There was a general halt, and the prisoner Pasha, assisted by his doctor, raised himself on one leg, supporting himself by the hood of the carriage. For some moments the two leaders gazed at each other. All at once the Grand-duke extended his hand and warmly shook that of Osman, saying—"I congratulate you on your defence of Plevna; it is one of the most splendid exploits in history."

Osman Pasha smiled sadly, and answered in a few agitated words. Then he rescued himself. The Russian officers cried "Bravo! Bravo!" repeatedly, and all saluted respectfully—every one regarding the hero of Plevna with admiration and sympathy. Prince Charles of Roumania, who had arrived about the same time, approached the carriage, and repeated unwittingly almost the same words as the Grand-duke, and also shook hands with Osman Pasha, who again raised himself and bowed, but this time in significant silence. He regarded the Roumanians as little better than rebels. After this meeting Prince Charles and the Grand-duke both proceeded towards Plevna, whither Osman also went, and was installed in one of the best Bulgarian houses, where he passed the night with his doctor and servants.

The Emperor of Russia, like his distinguished prisoner, was quartered for the night in one of the Bulgarian houses of Plevna. On the following morning he desired the company of Osman to breakfast, and showed a generous sense of the respect due to his foe by placing his carriage and escort at his disposal. The Emperor engaged in a conversation with him through an interpreter, in the course of which he asked a few questions as to what had been the state of his army, and the object of his attempt at a sortie; and after expressing admiration of his courage, informed Osman that his sword should be returned to him, expressing at the same time the hope that he would have no reason to be dissatisfied with his treatment in Russia. Osman Pasha, who was evidently gratified, made a profound salute to the Emperor and left. Shortly afterwards Major-general Stein restored to him his sword, and Colonel Klioutcharoff presented him with a sprig of myrtle as a sign that the prisoner army, and its valorous chief, should no longer be included amongst the enemies of Russia. Kharkoff was assigned as the place of his internment, and for this town, early on the 16th of December, Osman Pasha started, in a comfortable carriage belonging to the Red Cross Society, Captain Bibikoff, aide-de-camp of the Grand-duke, accompanying him.

At noon on the 11th the Emperor attended the celebration of a *Te Deum* in No. 5 redoubt, on the road between Plevna and Grivica, in which an impromptu altar had been erected for the occasion. At the entrance to the fortification the Grand-duke awaited his Majesty, who was accompanied in his carriage by the Prince of Roumania. As the Emperor approached the Grand-duke Nicholas he waved his cap in the air, shouting "Hurrah!" in the most hearty manner. The Grand-duke advanced and saluted, when his Majesty kissed him, and hung round his neck the grand cordon of the Order of St. George. He then decorated Generals Todleben, Imeretinski, Nepokoitschitski, and Levitzki with different grades of the same Order. He also gave Prince Charles of Roumania the Order of St. Andrew, a distinction heretofore confined to royal personages. During the religious service a tremendous salvo was fired from all the guns around Plevna—unaccompanied, however, by the angry hissing of shells which had char-

acterized such salutes during the previous five months.

The Emperor Alexander only awaited the fall of Plevna to return to Russia, where he would have gone long before had he listened to the advice of his physicians. On the 17th December he passed through Bucharest, where he was received with great enthusiasm; and on the 22nd he re-entered St. Petersburg amid the unbounded rejoicings and acclamations of his people.

Plevna being captured, the army formed for its investment had no longer any *raison d'être*, and was dissolved. Prince Charles, in a proclamation dated 13th December, took leave of the Russian troops, which he had commanded for four months; and on the 26th he entered Bucharest in his turn, where the Roumanians gave him as hearty a welcome as the Russians had bestowed upon their sovereign.

In spite of all the admiration expressed for Osman Pasha, it was impossible entirely to avoid questioning him as to the alleged atrocities around Plevna, and he was also informed of those at Telis. He replied—"As far as I am concerned, no one can accuse me or my soldiers of any atrocities of this kind. I know that our Bashi-bazouks are quite capable of them, and accordingly I took my precautions at Plevna in view of the possibility of such things. I drove out the most undisciplined, the most turbulent of them—men who might really be regarded as useless mouths—and incorporated the remainder in various regular battalions, thus obliging them to fight in the trenches. I hanged five who had given themselves up to marauding, and from that moment marauding was at an end. The only thing you can reproach me with is the order I issued to my skirmishers to prevent you from coming forward to carry off those of your men who had been killed or seriously wounded. But what was I to do? They were so near my intrenchments that you could not have failed to discover their weak points, and you would have profited by it at your next attack. For the rest, we were the first to suffer by the odour from the putrefying corpses: your soldiers had fallen close to my intrenchments—a fact that testifies to their valour."

The remarks of the Turkish General were important, as furnishing the probable key to his alleged refusal of the aid of British doctors, and

to his having sent many hundreds of wounded men away to Sophia, with the result of certain death to most of them. But whatever the result, military expediency demanded the removal of every useless mouth, and to this expediency the defender of Plevna considered himself bound to sacrifice all considerations of humanity. It must be observed, moreover, that the wounded who survived the journey were much better cared for at Sophia than they could possibly have been at Plevna; and that the continuance of such a number of sick and wounded in the besieged town would have imperilled thousands of other lives. Much excitement was created in connection with the report Osman Pasha had sent to the Porte, stating that he had taken 300 Roumanians prisoners, whilst on the surrender of Plevna not a single one was to be found. If, however, the Turks treated their prisoners no better than the Russians afterwards treated the heroic garrison of Plevna, it is small wonder that none were found alive. To this we shall have to refer presently.

The actual number of prisoners taken by the allied Russo-Roumanian army was as follows:—Ten pashas, 130 superior officers, 2000 subaltern officers, 40,000 infantry and artillerymen, and 1200 cavalry—total, 43,340. It was estimated that the attempt of Osman Pasha to break out from Plevna cost between 5000 and 6000 men, while 4000 sick and wounded were found in the houses of the town. The losses of the Russians, on the other hand, on the 10th December were severe. Nearly 2000 killed and wounded—chiefly grenadiers—testified to the impetuosity and fierceness of the Turkish attack.

In round numbers it may be said that the Turks who, behind their improvised earthworks, kept at bay an army of 150,000 men, were never more than 50,000. Allowing, for the sake of comparison, the fighting qualities of Turk and Russian to have been equal, the position of Osman Pasha may be said to have been worth to him at least 100,000 men. There is yet to be considered the artillery respectively engaged. There were captured 70,000 rifles and 75 guns, while the number of guns engaged in the bombardment of Plevna was nearly 600, or eight times the number possessed by the Turks. The value of the Plevna position was therefore vastly greater than the mere difference between the numbers of besiegers and besieged

This, though remarkable, was not so surprising as might at first appear; for, from our previous descriptions of the Turkish positions, it will have been seen that the western front was impregnable to assault, and that two-thirds of the eastern front were the same, on account of its being covered by the impassable Tuceonica ravine. The southern front, one-third of the eastern, and half of the northern, were the only places practicable for an assault. But however strong the natural features of the position were, the credit of having seized upon and utilized them, and of having rendered the weaker points equally impregnable, must clearly be accorded to Osman Pasha, and suffices to place him high amongst the best generals the campaign produced. Whether he was strategically correct in seizing this particular position is another matter, on which we may presently remark.

The majority of the prisoners were sent to Russia immediately after the fall of Plevna. The Russians must have been perfectly aware for some time previous to the 10th December that the end could not be far distant; but no provision appears to have been made for the contingency of thousands of starving and ill-clad men coming into their hands at the most severely trying season of the year. The result was that the army which had fought so gloriously in defence of Plevna, and had spread the fame of Osman Pasha throughout the world, were subjected to heart-rending sufferings and brutal treatment, such as have seldom disgraced a military triumph. The winter, which had hitherto been comparatively mild, suddenly became excessively rigorous. The severe cold which ensued was accompanied by heavy snow-storms; and the unfortunate Turks, who were without cloaks or warm clothing, and frequently without shoes, perished miserably by scores every day.

The Russians were either too absorbed with their victory to think of the prisoners, or too callous to suffering to care for them; for while they were thus sent on foot to their destination, thousands of empty transport waggons were going constantly to the rear. Not one of them, however, was even detailed to accompany the convoys to pick up those who fell by the wayside, where they were consequently always left to freeze or starve to death. What with this and other causes, the mortality amongst the captured men was so great that, when after the war the prisoners were re-

stored, Turks and Russians alike were aghast at the shrunken numbers.

It was not until full three days after the surrender of Plevna that the Russians were able to give attention to the vast numbers of sick and wounded lying within it. There never was any regular hospital in the town, the sick and wounded being accommodated in the mosques and some of the deserted houses. The attention given them here was at the best most meagre; and when the sortie occurred the attendants thought only of their own safety, and, leaving their charge, threw in their lot with those who tried to break through the Russian lines. The day and night of the battle passed, and the sufferers received no food or water, and their festering wounds were undressed. The following morning the Russians entered and took possession, and made the day one of rejoicing; the next day was busily occupied in counting the prisoners and trophies, arranging for their removal to Russia, and with attending to the wants of those who had fallen in the sortie. Not till the fourth day was any attention bestowed upon the sick, who during three whole days and nights of horrible suffering had been stretching their skeleton hands in vain towards heaven praying for a bit of bread or a drop of water. Neither friend nor foe having been there to alleviate their sufferings, or give the trifle needed to save them from a painful death, they had died by hundreds. Every temporary hospital had become a charnel house, the air of which was tainted with the putrefying corpses of the dead and the undressed wounds of those still living. The most active imagination could not picture the thousandth part of the frightful suffering, misery, and wretchedness found within the narrow limits of the town, nor draw the faintest outline of the panorama of ghastly horrors, almost unparalleled since the plagues of past centuries, which were there exhibited. In the houses forming the receptacles for the sick and wounded, living and dead lay together undistinguishable along the walls, behind the doors, and under the windows. Considerable force was sometimes needed to get open the door, as across the entrance there lay the lifeless bodies of wretched creatures who had dragged themselves thither in the last hours of their agony in hope of succour, or at least of a breath of fresh air; for in the unventilated rooms the air was thick with

putrid odours, which burst out when the door was opened, overpowering strong men, and causing them to turn sick and faint. In the mosques the pavement was covered with crouching forms, some moving at intervals, others motionless and silent; while here and there the faces of the dead came out in ghastly relief, with a fixed expression of great agony.

Nothing could be done before the dead were dragged out from among the living, and three open peasants' ox-carts were all that were available for removing the dead, while fifty soldiers were told off for conveying the bodies to the carts and burying them in the ditches. Both carts and men were utterly inadequate to the task; and after a while some Bulgarians were compelled to assist, who set themselves to the hated task with a brutality terrible to witness. They dragged the bodies down the stairs by the legs, the heads bumping from step to step with sickening thuds; then out into the courts through the filthy mud, where they slung them into the cart, with the heads or legs hanging over the side; and so continued to pile up the load with a score of half-naked corpses.

It was horrible to hear the conversation of the men who did this work. Occasionally they brought out a body still warm, the heart still beating, and the flush of life on the cheek. One said, "he is still alive," and proposed to leave him without stopping to decide the question. The others cried, "Devil take him! He will die before to-morrow anyway. In with him!" And so the living went in with the dead, and were tumbled into the same grave. When the three carts were full, they started away through the streets toward the ditches outside the town. The horrible load jolted and shook, and now and then a body fell out into the mud, and was dragged into the cart again, and thrown down and jammed in solidly to prevent a recurrence of the accident. By providing sufficient means of transport the removal might have been effected during the night; but as it was, the heartless proceedings described were carried on in the open day in public streets crowded with men, women, and children, until the sickening spectacle became so common that no one heeded or cared as it passed.

As far as possible, when the dead were removed, bread and water were distributed, and the feeble wretches fought each other with their last breath

in their greed for the nourishment. Some, propped up against the wall, slowly ate until the unmistakable pallor came over their faces, and their eyes were fixed in death. Even the effort of eating the long-needed food was too great for their waning strength. The living would then clutch at the remaining morsel in the dead man's hand, struggle for it with all their feeble power, and curse each other and wrangle over the spoil, perhaps to fall dead themselves before they could eat the coveted bread.

With the fall of Plevna there disappeared, not merely the best Ottoman general, but the flower of the Turkish army—at a time, too, when the Russian triumphs in Armenia had already almost closed the richest recruiting ground of the Empire. The best result of Osman's gallant defence was to obtain for Turkey the alliance of winter. The Balkans were already covered with snow, the Bulgarian roads were tracks of mud, and there was the probability that cold would smite down more Russian soldiers than the Turkish bullets had done. But, on the other hand, these military difficulties were not of the first, nor even the second or third order. Troops could contrive to endure cold; roads ankle-deep in mud had for months been among the usual incidents of Bulgarian campaigning; and leaders like General Gourko were not to be held back by a few feet of snow. The rigours of winter simply multiplied the necessities of military waste. They meant the expenditure of more roubles and more life. Russia, however, had by this time reached that state in which nations care little as to the numbers of millions sterling they fling away, or of brave men they leave on the battle-field, so long as they accomplish their object.

Suleiman Pasha and his forces in the Quadrilateral had been unable to make any impression on the line held by the Czarewitsch, even when the latter was distracted by the necessity of being ready to give some help to the army before Plevna; and now that a whole army of trained and seasoned troops was set free, the Russian base of operations in Bulgaria was rendered absolutely secure, and there was nothing to check their advance but the force at Kamarli. What the value of that force was likely to be might be estimated from the fact, that at this critical moment its commander, Mehemet Ali, was once more superseded. He had been appointed hardly a month before,

and consequently had barely had time to acquaint himself with his force and position. It was little to be wondered at, however; for at the same moment the Minister of War at Constantinople was also superseded, and it seemed as if the Turkish counsels were in utter confusion. It is, indeed, not a little instructive to bear in mind that the course of this war had been in great measure decided, as is usually the case, not by mere physical strength, but by the moral qualities which alone can make a due use of it. In the Turkish counsels there had been from the first no unity and no loyal co-operation, and the lives of brave men had been sacrificed to personal jealousies and palace intrigues. On the Russian side there was now not merely a vast superiority in numbers and other resources, but a united and victorious army; on the other side was a broken and demoralized force, scarcely knowing its own generals, and in the hands of a bewildered government.

Our space prevents us dwelling at length upon the propriety of Osman Pasha's strategy in allowing himself to be closed in and surrounded, or of his choosing the particular position of Plevna in which to make his final stand. It is easy to say that he made a mistake, and should have done otherwise, and saved his army; but by such assertions a presumption is introduced which is questionable. It is only in the exact sciences that the results which would follow under different conditions can be with certainty predicted; and the science of war is far from exact. Indeed, so varied and numerous are the elements of success or failure, that war may be almost regarded as the most inexact of all the sciences.

In the chapter in which we described the capture of Lovatz, we have already pointed out some of the great strategic advantages of that position; and the whole course of events during and after the siege of Plevna tends to confirm our views of the superiority of Lovatz for defensive purposes. The Danube, the first line of Turkish defence, having been passed, it then became of vital importance to utilize to the very utmost the second, or Balkan line. The Ottoman Empire could not be said to have been in danger of overthrow, even if the Russians occupied the whole of Bulgaria; and while fighting material of any worth was exceedingly scarce compared to the sore needs of Turkey at this crisis, armies lost merely in defence of Bulgaria may be said to have been virtually

thrown away. The vital point which would endanger the Moslem power lay south of the Balkans; and considering this fact, it would seem that Osman Pasha's chief object should have been to protect thoroughly his portion of the Balkan line. He should have taken his stand at a point where he could not only have effectively attained this main object, but from which he could at the same time have assisted his brother generals, in case they received the full shock of the Russian advance, and his own lines were not threatened.

Now Plevna, it must be admitted, occupied a central position for barring the Russian advance into Western Bulgaria, had it been worth the sacrifice of a Turkish army in order to detain the Russians for a certain time between the Danube and the Balkans. We have seen that endeavour was made to keep open the communications with Plevna by the rather sanguine expedient of establishing a line of forts along the Sophia road; but it seems astonishing to suppose that a man of Osman's sagacity believed the Russians would never threaten his communications with anything more formidable than a few regiments of Cossacks. Valuable as the place might be for temporarily detaining a Russian army, from the first it must have been seen that Plevna could be easily surrounded, and its defenders starved into submission; and under such circumstances a Turkish army would not only be lost, but the Western Balkans would be left inadequately protected. This being the vital point for Osman's consideration, there can be no question that the position of Plevna was badly chosen; and although Russian blunders have made it famous in history, Osman Pasha does not deserve any credit, strategically speaking, for the greatness forced upon him by the mistakes of his enemies. Plevna was made the Turkish stronghold, and Lovatz the outwork; but this plan of action should have been reversed. Osman Pasha never had men enough to hold the naturally defensive lines of the Plevna position against assaults from all sides at the same moment; therefore his success in withstanding the allied attacks was due as much to the want of generalship on the part of the allies as to his own readiness in defensive warfare, aided by the indomitable courage and extraordinary endurance of his troops. On the other hand, the Lovatz amphitheatre was smaller in circumference than that of Plevna, the

heights much more elevated and precipitous, and the crest—held by an adequate defensive force—would have commanded all the surrounding country; whereas at Plevna, on a considerable portion of the Ottoman line, it was impossible to command any large area of the adjacent country. Osman Pasha's army was large enough to have occupied the whole of the Lovatz crest of hills, and the positions thus held would have been absolutely impregnable. That they were captured by Prince Imeretinsky on the 3rd September was simply owing to the utterly insufficient force—about 7000 men—with which they were held; but it will be remembered that, though assailed by 21,000 Russians, this small garrison retreated with comparatively few men lost, and without losing a single gun.

Further, there was only one road from Plevna to the Russian line of communications, whilst there were three from Lovatz—viz., the *chaussée* to Gabrova, another to Tirnova, and a third by following the Tirnova *chaussée* to Balvan, and then turning northward to Gorny Studen; consequently, with these additional advantages of communication, the Sistova pontoon bridges might have been threatened fully as much from Lovatz as from Plevna, while from the former place Osman Pasha could have struck in flank the Russian columns moving upon Tirnova or the Shipka Pass; but this was impossible from Plevna, with Nikopol in the hands of the allies. Lovatz, again, rested against the Balkans, and therefore had no stretch of open country, like that between Plevna and Orkhanie, by means of which it could be surrounded and the garrison taken prisoners. Lovatz was thus not only unassailable of itself (defended by Osman Pasha's army), but it could not have been isolated, as Plevna was, while the Trojan Pass afforded a shorter line for supplies from Roumelia than that *viâ* Orkhanie and Sophia. Had Osman Pasha, therefore, made his head-quarters at Lovatz, he could have defended the left wing of the Balkans, protected Western Bulgaria as far as it was possible to do so with the means at his command, threatened the Russian line of communications between the Danube and Tirnova far more effectually than he could from Plevna, and, if unassailed himself in the Balkan defiles, he could have effectually assisted in the defence of the Central Balkan line between the Hain Boghaz and Trojan Passes.

Having resolved to make his stand at Plevna, it is difficult to say exactly how far Osman Pasha was to blame for being compelled to stay there, after it became evident that his operations would be confined to that passive kind of defence which must inevitably fail in the end. It is probable that the very perfection of the defences of Plevna proved fatal to Osman Pasha's army. When he had spent months in constructing redoubts and batteries, and when a circuit of thirty miles had been connected by rifle trenches, it was naturally a difficult matter for the General to abandon the position, as having rendered all the service of which it was capable; hence Osman Pasha fell into the mistake of clinging too long to the place he had justly made famous. Either his intrenched camp should have been kept in connection with an exterior army, or Plevna should have been abandoned for some position nearer the Balkans directly after the Russian assault on July 30. We have shown that after that of September 11, Osman was anxious to retire from Plevna; but by that time the Constantinople Military Council, proud of the gallant stand their "Ghazi" Osman was making, decided that he was to remain, and promised to send an army of relief. Remembering the failure of his sortie of August 31, and that very soon afterwards the Russians were immensely strengthened by the arrival of reinforcements, and especially by the Imperial Guard, it is very doubtful indeed if any subsequent attempt of Osman Pasha to withdraw could have succeeded. Both the General and the Military Council, therefore, were to blame in the matter—the one for putting off his withdrawal until it was very likely too late to attempt it, even if permitted, and the other for holding out false promises of an army of relief. We have seen that Mehemet Ali's force, under this name, was a miserable failure; and that isolated, helpless, and menaced with starvation, the gallant Osman was for weeks a prisoner within the very works which his genius had created and his courage defended.

There remains yet one feature of the strategy of Osman Pasha which cannot but have occurred to any one who has studied his tactics—viz., his entire powerlessness for offensive operations. It is not a little remarkable that before the beginning of the war of 1828 General Jomini handed to the Emperor Nicholas a memorandum, stating that two alternative plans might be adopted for con-

ducting the campaign. The first was to capture the Danubian fortresses, in order to obtain a firm extended basis for the passage of the Balkans; the second, to mask those fortresses, and march direct upon Adrianople. "The latter," added the celebrated strategist, "would be dangerous if the enemy, under better leadership than hitherto, were to make use of the strategical advantages of the territory in order to unite his forces opposite our right flank, resting on Widdin and Sophia as his supports, and if, without being alarmed by our movements, he confined his action to the western part of the district." To a certain extent the tactics of the Turks singularly accorded with the idea of the great strategist thus foreshadowed fifty years before. At the opening of the war there was in Western Bulgaria—chiefly at Widdin, but dotted about at Rahova and several other places—a splendid Turkish force, the mobility of which was sufficiently proved by the silent swiftness with which, before even its existence was suspected by the enemy, it was gathered together from scattered places, and thrust forward, to the astonishment of the Russians, upon their right flank. Jomini could scarcely have foreseen, however, that so effective a weapon of offence would merely have been planted down at some little distance from the main line of Russian advance, there passively to await inevitable capture. Not only, however, was this the case, but the most obvious and palpable opportunity of taking the offensive with advantage was allowed to pass unimproved. This was on the 30th July. The strategic position of the Russians was, even before that, decidedly unfavourable; but after Krudener's defeat of that day it became to a high degree dangerous. Had Osman Pasha been able, immediately after the battle, to fall upon and vigorously pursue the beaten and demoralized troops of his opponents, and drive them back beyond the Osma—a task for the achievement of which his army, as far as numbers were concerned, was certainly strong enough—a mere repulse would have been turned into a disastrous rout; and at such a crisis it seems difficult to believe that, by a little united and prompt action on the part of the Turkish armies of the east and south, an overwhelming and crushing blow might not have been inflicted upon the invaders. We have in a previous chapter questioned Osman Pasha's ability to successfully assume the offensive

at this crisis. In reviewing his strategic policy, however, we can have no doubt in asserting that at all events the Turkish general ought to have been in a position to do so, and that his inability betrayed a lack of foresight in not having provided himself, either on his way to Plevna or after his arrival there, with the amount of train and other necessities requisite to assume the offensive on the first opportunity. Had such operations been provided for, and carried out at the crisis of the 30th July, the passive attitude of the army of Widdin during the first weeks of the campaign, and its subsequent skilfully and secretly conducted march at a decisive moment to a decisive point, would justly have taken rank as a brilliantly successful execution of a clever strategical conception; and the "secret plan" of the first Commander-in-chief of the Turkish armies, Abdul Kerim Pasha, which was so much laughed at, and the very existence of which was doubted, might have lived in history as a master-stroke in warfare.

On the whole, therefore, while Osman Pasha, by his memorable and magnificent defence of Plevna, may be said to have prolonged the war and deferred the collapse of his country for several months, it is doubtful whether he did not, on the other hand, confer a real and very great advantage upon the Russians. The latter had decidedly underrated their antagonists, and it was probably fortunate for them that the check they experienced occurred on the north rather than the south side of the Balkans. They were there awoken to a true apprehension of the power of resistance possessed by Turkey, and induced, to a certain extent against their will, to bring up and place in the field forces which ultimately sufficed to achieve for them decisive success. Had the invader been checked either before Adrianople or Sophia, instead of at Plevna, it would have been incomparably more difficult for the Russians to remedy the mistake they made in embarking upon an enterprise so difficult as the invasion of Turkey with an army of inadequate strength. Russia had to put forth all her energies to retrieve her position; and it is easy to conceive that, had lengthened lines of communication and the conveyance of stores, supplies, and reinforcements across such a mountain range as the Balkans been added to her difficulties, the campaign might have ended in her discomfiture.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Turkish Quadrilateral—Descriptions of the Fortresses of Rustchuk, Shumla, Silistria, and Varna—Early Movements of the Russian Left Wing—Constitution of the Army of the Czarewitch—Success of Cavalry acting as Infantry—Leisurely Advance of the Russians—Description of the Country Invaded—Disadvantages of having only one Bridge over the Danube—Abdul Kerim's Proceedings—Advance and Retreat of Ahmed Eyoub—Demoralization of the Turkish Troops—Extraordinary Apathy of Abdul Kerim—His "Plan"—Dissatisfaction of the Sultan—Occupation of Positions on the Lom by the Russians—A Brilliant Exploit—The so-called Siege of Rustchuk—Removal of Abdul Kerim, and Appointment of Mehemet Ali—Sketch of his Career—Difficulty and responsibility of the task he had now undertaken—Employment of European Officers—Activity of the new Generalissimo—Marked improvement in the Army—Skirmish at Essirdji, and death of Aziz Pasha—Erection of Batteries at Rasgrad and Eski-Juma—Reinforcements from Constantinople—Failure of the Turkish Commissariat and Transport—The Egyptian Troops—The Turkish Army divided into Two Corps—Effect of their Defeat at Plevna on the Russian Plans against the Quadrilateral—Inability of the Turks to take advantage of the Situation—Uselessness of General Zimmerman in the Dobrukscha—Dangerous Attenuation of the Russian Line—Mehemet Ali's Plan of Attack—Important Preliminary Successes of the Turks at Kizilar and Yaslar—Mehemet Ali decides to assume the Offensive in earnest—The Country to be fought over, and disposition of the Opposing Forces—Battle of Karahassankoi—Description and Incidents of the Struggle—Defeat of the Russians, and Retreat across the Lom—Strategic result of the Engagement, and Losses on both sides—Progress of Mehemet Ali's Plan of separating the two Russian Corps *d'Armée*—His Right Wing is brought up from Rasgrad—Sortie against Kadikoi—Russian Positions at Kacelyevo—General Arnoldy's Dispositions—Mehemet Ali's Plan of Attack—A badly-executed Turning Movement—Successful Advance of the Turks—Stubborn resistance of the Russians—Rash attack on Ablava by Ibrahim Pasha repulsed—Russian retreat from Popkoi—Prince Hassan's notions of Strategy—Discontent among his Troops—Mehemet Ali's Embarrassments—Ultimate resolve to Advance upon Biela—General Retreat of the Czarewitch's Army—Combat at Sinankoi—Russian Concentration—Reinforcements—Order from Constantinople to attack Biela—Mehemet's Plan—Strength of the Russian Positions at Cerkovna—Turkish Forces engaged—Failure of Attack through inability of the Reserves to arrive in time—Heroic conduct of a Squadron of Russian Lancers—Desperate Attack by Ali-Riza—Mehemet Ali's resolve to retreat accounted for—Turkish Army withdrawn to Kacelyevo—The Popkoi-Yaslar Line—Exodus of Mahometan Inhabitants from the abandoned district—Immobility of the Czarewitch's Army until too late to harass the Turkish retreat—Mehemet Ali superseded, and Suleiman Pasha made Generalissimo—The Kadikoi Position partially abandoned by the Turks—Death of Prince Sergius of Leuchtenberg—The Imperial Family raised in popular estimation—Turkish and Russian Winter Quarters—Suleiman Pasha ordered to resume the offensive on account of the critical position of Plevna—Attack on the Russian Left at Pirgos on November 19—A second and more serious attack on November 26 repulsed with loss—Suleiman resolves to advance towards Timova—Battle of Elena—Valour of the Russian Detachment—Victory of the Turks, who capture eleven Guns and 259 Prisoners—Success not followed up—Adventures of a Russian Regiment—Fresh attack on the Russian Communications over the Danube—An Attack of over 40,000 Turks triumphantly Repulsed—The effect of the Fall of Plevna on the Turkish Army in the Quadrilateral.

WHEN General Zimmermann entered the Dobrudja and the Grand-duke Nicholas crossed the Danube at Simnitsa, it was at first supposed that the Russians intended to operate on both flanks of the famous Turkish Quadrilateral—Rustchuk, Shumla, Silistria, and Varna. But when General Zimmermann's forces remained unmoved along Trajan's wall, while General Gourko's advance corps of the main army was pushed forward across the Balkans, it became evident that the plan of the Russians was to use their wings to keep in check the Turkish armies of the Quadrilateral and of Widdin, while the centre moved rapidly on across the Balkans to Adrianople, where they hoped to speedily terminate the campaign. In previous chapters we have seen how soon and how completely this plan, which had apparently been framed with a contemptuous disregard of their enemy's strength, was frustrated.

The Czarewitch was chosen to oppose the Turkish army of the Quadrilateral, and in this chapter we propose to describe his leisurely advance as far as

the environs of Rustchuk; his relapse into a purely defensive attitude, consequent upon the disasters at Plevna; his retreat to Biela before the vigorous offensive movement of the Turks under Mehemet Ali; and the subsequent operations of the Turks under Suleiman Pasha.

First, however, it will be interesting to give a brief description of Rustchuk and the other fortresses of the Quadrilateral, which have figured so often and so largely in the wars between Russia and Turkey, and which in 1828-29 delayed the invaders nearly a whole year.

Rustchuk is situated at the confluence of the Lom and the Danube. Here, as all along the river until near Galatz, the right bank is high and steep and dominates the Roumanian shore, which is low and marshy. The breadth of the Danube is more than 800 yards at its ordinary summer level, or twice as broad as the Thames at London Bridge; but during floods it overflows the Roumanian bank, and increases in breadth to

nearly a mile. The town is situated on the plateau, which rises abruptly from fifty to a hundred feet above the level of the river at twenty to eighty paces from it. It has a normal population of about 30,000. The houses are mostly low wooden buildings scarcely better than huts, and the streets are dirty and ill-paved. The defences included the old fortified girdle, and a series of independent outworks. The *enceinte* consisted of eleven bastioned fronts with proportionally short curtains. The ditch was about forty feet wide and ten deep. The scarp and counterscarp were of masonry. The bastions were each armed with from four to six guns, some of them being of heavy Krupp calibre. The outworks surrounded the town and actual citadel by a kind of double girdle, or semi-circle, beginning and ending with the Danube. With the exception of a crown work at the north-eastern part of the bastioned inclosure, where a flat track facilitated an enemy's approach, all these outworks were of very modern date. As the old ramparts were felt to be no match for modern rifled cannon, a plan was drawn up and approved some years before the war for transforming the environs into an entrenched camp, wherein the city itself was to figure as a secondary shelter for the garrison and the stores. But when it had to be carried out, everything was wanting—especially the necessary money; and at the end of 1876 the Turks had only just commenced the construction of the principal entrenchment on the Sary Bair, called the Levant Tabia, which crowned, at a distance of 1300 yards from the ramparts, the uppermost summit of that elevation. It was formed of two pentagonal redoubts, shaped like a butterfly's wings, with a ravelin turned towards the enemy before the concave angle which they constituted. It contained barracks and casemates for the accommodation of 2000 men. The outside of the parapets, however, presented only simple earthworks consisting of clay and turf at an incline of 45 degrees, and the ten-feet deep ditches were neither studded with palisades nor flanked by *caponnières*. The total number of separate works at Rustchuk was twenty-nine, but only eight of them were inclosed and deserved to be called independent outworks; the others were merely advanced earthworks, hurriedly constructed to fill the gaps between the main forts. They were built, however, with due appreciation of the

nature of the ground, and particularly with regard to recent improvements in artillery. Their position was somewhat thus:—Three lay between the Danube and the road from Rustchuk to Tirmova, and of these the Quarantine fort was the most considerable. An inclosed work lay between the before-mentioned road and the river Lom. Between the latter and the high road to Shumla, on the ridges running parallel to the Danube, there was a series of seven forts of which the Levant Tabia, before mentioned, was the largest and most formidable. Between the roads to Shumla and Silistria there were six, the chief being Maratin Tabia. The individual works were variously equipped, according to their size and importance, but none carried less than four guns—about a fourth of the whole being Krupp's. The river front was also very strongly defended. For a space of three miles along the margin of the stream, from far above the town to the bluff below it, the bank was thickly studded with earthwork batteries—some looking across the river, some facing up stream and others fronting down stream, so that their cannon could sweep with front and flanking fire the whole breadth of the Danube.

Rustchuk is the terminus of the line from Varna and Shumla to the Danube; and on the opposite bank of the river lies Giurgevo, the terminus of the Roumanian railway, by which communication is assured with Moldavia, with Russia through Jassy, and with all Western Wallachia. The possession of the town would therefore have been of the greatest possible advantage to Russia; for it would have enabled them to keep up their supplies by railway, not only to the Danube, but to a point within comparatively easy striking distance of the centre of the Balkans. Rustchuk, moreover, is at the head, not only of the railway to Varna, but also of one of the most frequented roads across the Balkans, via, Rasgrad, Eski-Juma, Osman-Bazar, and Kazan to Karnabad and Adrianople.

The entrenched camp of Shumla, where Abdul Kerim had his head-quarters at the commencement of the war, was next in interest to Rustchuk, and on account of its geographical position and strategical value, resulting from great natural strength enhanced by art, ranked among the most important military positions of the Turks. The town itself lies on the eastern slope of a mountain spur, about thirty miles to the

northward of the main chain of the Balkans, and separated from it by the valley of the Killy or Akili-Kamehi. This isolated hill-block rises to from 600 to 800 feet above the adjoining plain, forming at the top a kind of plateau, perfectly level and surrounded by perpendicular precipices of rock which are accessible only in a few places. Below these rocky walls the descent gradually becomes less steep as it slopes down to the plain. The upper part of the bluff is thickly overgrown with shrubs and underwood, so that locomotion there is mostly limited to the narrow paths and tracks in which men can merely move in Indian file. Towards the east the plateau throws out two branches, of which the southern is short, steep, and abrupt; while the northern ridge is lower and longer, and sinks into the plain with a gentle slope. Beneath the crest of the northern ridge lies the hamlet of Strandscha, and at the foot of the bolder heights of the southern arm is the village of Tschengel. Between these two branches or arms of the plateau is a deep sloping valley, extending from the foot of the rock-walled summit to the plain. In this valley, which has the form of a horse-shoe, lies the town of Shumla. It has an imposing and picturesque appearance from the plain. The houses rise one above another up the slope, the horizontal line of their roofs being broken by the domes and minarets of the mosques. High up the valley on the left were the great square masses of the infantry barracks and the konak; on the opposite side were the cavalry barracks and arsenal; and further up the hill side a new hospital. The ordinary population is under 40,000. The situation of Shumla, at the junction of several main roads, makes it a town of considerable commercial as well as military importance. It is the point of intersection of four roads—from Adrianople to Silistria and the lower Danube; from Varna to Rustchuk, Sistova, and Widdin (with a railway between the two former places); from Bourgas on the Black Sea to Turtukai; and lastly, the road which traverses the centre of Bulgaria from Sophia to the Black Sea. In peaceful times therefore, the industries of Shumla—the manufacture of silk and leather and brasswork—are in a flourishing condition.

Properly speaking, Shumla was no fortress, but an intrenched camp protected by a double line of forts erected on the highest points of this easily defensible position. On the summit of either ridge overlooking the plain, which spreads out like

a fan in front of the town, was a powerful fort. Two other forts and a series of earthworks stretched across the plain between the two ridges, and formed, with the forts upon them, the first line of defence constructed in the reign of Mahomet II. from the plans of Count Moltke, then in the Turkish service. Beyond them, again, the ravines of two brooks, the Bakhulschu and the Strandscha, formed natural obstacles to an attacking force. In order to keep pace with the latest development of modern artillery however, a second line of forts had been formed, far outside even the lines occupied by the Russians besieging the place in 1828-29; the two last-constructed of which were of the approved modern type, with revetted escarps and ample bomb-proof accommodation, and were designed by two former Prussian officers, Reschid and Blum Pashas. The main works were armed during the war with about 200 guns of the most various make, among them being about fifty heavy Krupp cannon. The smaller works and batteries were left unarmed, but were, in case of need, to be provided with field guns. The area, bounded by the line of works on the one hand, and the steep ascent to the plateau on the other, which was absolutely guarded from all observation from without, was able to shelter an army of more than 150,000 men. The words of Moltke, upon the possibility of investing and blockading this wonderful stronghold in 1828, were as true in 1877 as when they were written. He says, "It was possible to invest the Turkish camp; but it is with Shumla as with a fortress on the sea-shore: it can well be besieged from one side, but on the opposite side the enemy must be content to blockade it at a certain distance. The elevated plateau, at the foot of which the town is situated, has a circumference of about twenty miles; and as it is not possible even to gain a footing on this height, the attack is obliged to form a cordon of still greater circumference in order to watch the principal exits. The investment, to be effective, demands numerous and strong detachments, because the enemy in this wooded and hilly region can approach them unawares and surprise them with superior forces."

Silistria had always been regarded as amongst the most important strategical posts in Bulgaria, and with reason; for it commanded one of the most practicable passages of the Danube, and threatened the communications of any army advancing on

either Shumla or Varna. The town is of no great extent, being smaller than either Widdin or Rustchuk. It is built on a point which runs into the river, and narrows it so that at the ferry the crossing is only 800 yards; but above and below the town the width of the stream is much greater, and below it is studded with islands. With regard to its fortifications, Silistria was surrounded in the first place by a bastioned *enceinte*. Facing the river were four fronts, almost in a straight line, and nearly parallel to the bank. The remaining six fronts, which completed the polygon, formed a semi-circle, projecting inland. The ditches were from twenty-five to thirty-five yards wide, and between ten and twelve feet deep, with revetted escarps and counterscarps, and were all well flanked by the bastions. Although, however, sufficiently strong to be secure against open attack by storm, the *enceinte* of Silistria could not be considered as of a formidable profile; but it was in its exterior defences that the real strength of the fortress lay. The table-land of Bulgaria, which here approaches close to the Danube, and is 200 feet high and almost flat, overlooks the town at a distance of 1200 yards from the old walls. Where, however, the Russians constructed their batteries in 1828-29, there were in 1877 some admirably constructed outworks of a formidable description, which were arranged in two lines—the nearer about 1600 and the more advanced about 2000 yards distant from the old walls. In each there was a bomb-proof masonry redoubt for the defence of the gorge. The largest of these detached works was on Akbar's Hill, due south of the town, on the highest ground occupied by the fortification. In its construction many modern improvements were introduced. The ditches were flanked by bomb-proof caponieres, placed in the angles of the work, and giving a musketry and artillery fire each way. The escarp wall was continued eight feet above the level of the ground, and was loopholed for musketry, the parapet being retired about eight feet from it, so that, even if the wall were breached, the parapet would not necessarily fall. The forts were all within range of the fortress; but as they were upon much higher ground, its fire could have been but of little assistance to them.

Varna, the remaining fortress of the Quadrilateral, is situated on the Black Sea at the mouth of the Devna, near the creek, formed by the waters of the river, which bears the name of Lake

Demnos. The town and fortress stand between two ranges of heights rising to nearly 1000 feet, which jut out into the sea and inclose the harbour. These hills, which completely command the town, are situated at a distance of from two to three miles from the inner fortifications. The latter had been put in a complete state of repair, and armed, especially the batteries looking seaward, with guns of heavy calibre. The six lunettes, constructed as advanced works during the defence of 1828-29, were fitted up anew, and in compliance with the necessities arising from modern long range artillery, fourteen forts and redoubts had been constructed upon the heights, on the most improved German system. From these, especially from the broad plateau on the north of the castle, upon which was established the strongest of the forts, the defenders could not only face a naval attack, but could also pour down a murderous fire over the country, which the position entirely commanded. The various defences were armed with about 300 cannon in all, ninety of which were Krupps of large calibre.

The possession of the town was of immense importance to the Turks, as it was the port to which all supplies and men intended for the Danube and the Quadrilateral were sent by sea. If Varna had fallen into the hands of the Russians, not only would it have been necessary to have conveyed supplies to Eastern Bulgaria by a long and difficult land route, but the Russians would have been able to attack the Turkish field army in the rear.

Having thus briefly described the formidable nature of the fortresses which sheltered the Turkish field-army under Abdul Kerim and succeeding commanders, we will turn to the movements of the Russian left wing, whose duty it was to mask these strongholds, keep the Turkish field-army in check, and, if possible, capture Rustchuk.

The army of the Czarewitch, the formation of which was decided immediately after the passage of the Danube, was composed from the first of two Army Corps, the 12th and the 13th. The 11th Corps posted at Kozarevica under the orders of Schakhowskoi, was to combine its movements with this army, but not to form an integral part of it. The mission of the 12th Corps was to invest Rustchuk, and lay siege to it with the co-operation of the heavy artillery installed on the other bank of the Danube, at Giurgevo and

Slobodzie. That of the 13th Corps was to watch the army of Shumla and to cover the investing corps. The Czarewiteh, who was called to command the Russian army of the East—which the official reports called the army of Rustchuk because it was particularly designed to act against that place—is the second son of the Emperor Alexander II. He was born in 1845, and was already twenty years old when his elder brother, the Czarewiteh Nicholas, died, and he became the presumptive heir to the crown. This sudden elevation was not without its disadvantages, for he had not been educated for the throne—his studies having been devoted almost exclusively to military affairs. In Russia he is generally regarded as the prototype of Slav energy, and on different occasions has shown decided sympathies for the Slavophile party.

On the 3rd of July the Turks unaccountably abandoned their position at the bridge over the Jantra, and the Russians seized it on the following day. The Turks then took up a position from Obirtenik to Trestenik on the Biela-Rustchuk road, from which they again retired a few days later, quietly and in good order. Immediately after the occupation of Biela by the Russians, the valleys of the Lom were invaded by the cavalry of the 12th Corps, commanded by General Baron Dritzen. On the 9th July a regiment of Don Cossacks, under Colonel Cherkissaloff, encountered at Beklausa a Turkish regiment of cavalry drawn up to bar the Rustchuk road, and supported by infantry and guns. Unable to drive off the enemy without infantry, Colonel Cherkissaloff sent back for Colonel Bilderling's dragoons. On coming up they dismounted, and throwing out skirmishers in company with the cavalry, forced the enemy to retire. The system of having cavalry armed with the same rifle as infantry, and drilled to act as such, was thus proved completely successful.

The advance of the Russian main body was very leisurely. Although the cavalry had entered Biela on the 4th and 5th of July, only one infantry division, the 33rd, belonging to the 12th Corps, had reached it by the 11th. On that date the 12th Division belonging to the same corps was at Pavlo, a few miles behind, with the Czarewiteh and the Grand-duke. Of the 13th Corps one division, the 35th, which was amongst the earliest troops to cross the river, had been, in the first instance, sent on to Ovea Mojila, a village in a south-westerly direction from Sistova, and

had then nearly reached Biela after a march across country. The 1st Division, which formed the other half of the 13th Corps, was at the same time a little to the south of Pavlo, so that the whole infantry of the army of Rustchuk was within a few hours' march of Biela. The headquarters of the cavalry division were at Monastir, about eight miles in advance of Biela, on the road to Rustchuk. The Cossacks were further forward, spread over the country, and busy driving in the scattered parties of Turks who had been lurking in the woods.

Four rivers, which join together into a single trunk before falling into the Danube, bear the name of Lom; they are, going from west to east, the Banicka Lom, the Kara (or black) Lom, the Solenik Lom, and the Beli Lom. The country is easy to defend, consisting as it does of a continuous succession of hills of unequal height—for the most part covered with woods without sufficient undergrowth to prevent the passage of troops of all arms—and ever-changing valleys, which in the pure transparent air form landscapes of great beauty. A traveller, who passed through this district only a few days before the arrival of the Russians, wrote—"It is difficult to imagine any country more smiling and fertile. The soil is so rich that the ploughed lands look the colour of chocolate. Cattle and horses graze by hundreds in the meadows; the trees with rounded tops, which are capriciously scattered over the country, resemble at a distance large green pins stuck into a carpet in order to relieve the colours. Everywhere peasants dressed in sheep-skin caps (Bulgarians), or adorned with turbans (native Mahometans and Tartars), are working—mowing the grass, or leading cattle."

For about ten days the cavalry alone operated beyond the Jantra; the infantry remaining at Pavlo and Biela. The chief cause of the delay was the necessity of accumulating supplies to feed the troops before the advance could begin in earnest; another was the forward movement of General Gourko. The Turkish army practically extended from Rasgrad to Osman Bazar; therefore the position of the Russians on the Jantra prevented the Turks from making a flank march, in order to change front, and move to their left with the object of cutting off the Russian column passing the mountains.

On the 17th July the Czarewiteh received

permission to resume his advance, and on the 18th he crossed the Jantra, and marched towards the Lom with the object of forcing the positions of Achmed Eyoub Pasha's army upon that river, so as to isolate Rustchuk, and then lay siege to it. At the same time a bridge was commenced at Petrosani, between Simnitza and Giurgevo, in order to shorten the transport of the heavy *matériel* for the siege, which was to arrive by railway from Bucharest. An immense quantity of ammunition had already been accumulated at the Banyasa station, ten miles from Giurgevo.

As soon as Abdul Kerim learnt that the Russians had crossed the Danube at Sistova, he despatched Achmed Eyoub with 25,000 men to relieve Eschref Pasha of the responsibility of supreme command at Rustchuk; after which, for reasons unfathomable, the positions which Eschref had been ordered to leave were re-occupied and re-evacuated. But meanwhile the Russians, finding no obstacles to their progress, had established themselves upon the Jantra, and were pushing on their Cossacks in all directions. Only a few trifling skirmishes of cavalry occurred as the Turks, abandoning the defence of the Jantra without burning a cartridge, slowly retreated from Trestenik on the Biela-Rustchuk road, in three columns, towards the Kara Lom, behind which Achmed Eyoub finally took refuge and established his head-quarters at Kadikoi, a few miles from Rustchuk. He remained there ten days; but when the Russian advance recommenced, suddenly perceiving that by extending along the Lom they might cut off his retreat and drive him back upon Rustchuk, he immediately decamped, and taking in haste the road to Rasgrad, did not rest until he reached Torlak, from which, a little re-assured, he quietly retreated to Rasgrad, arriving there on the 20th July. The troops marched in a confused body, without scouts or advance-guard—less like an army that is retreating in good order without combat, than a beaten horde of soldiers. A Turkish army on the march always possesses a little of this appearance; but on this occasion the disorder much exceeded the proportions usual even amongst them, and marked, on the one side, the negligence of the Staff, on the other the demoralization of the soldiers. The small number of patients in the ambulance waggons proved that, although the soldiers were disheartened by the useless manœuvres

they had been made to accomplish, their sturdy frames were still resistant and their health satisfactory. Yet they had been put upon such rations since their departure from Shumla as no soldier except the Turk could have endured—often having to rely upon the grains of corn collected and cooked in the fields along the road.

The demoralization of the troops was very natural. How could an army have confidence in its chief, after the series of retreats without fighting which had just inaugurated the defence of Bulgaria? If the Russians had pushed on vigorously to Rasgrad, where their appearance was universally expected, they might have gained an easy victory—attacking a place without intrenchments and an army conquered in advance.

It was quite time for the "plan," of which the Commander-in-chief boasted, to be brought into effective operation. But Abdul Kerim sat composedly in his tent, apparently caring for none of these things. Not only did he seem to look upon the invasion as of no material consequence, but almost to regard it as a necessary part of a programme marked out beforehand. Replying to the urgent remonstrances of the Sultan, he said, "I beseech your Majesty not to trouble yourself about the passage of the Russians at Sistova; it is of no importance. I have an excellent plan, which will certainly result in the total defeat of the Russians, and will prevent any one of those who have crossed from ever returning alive to his own country." He then requested that he might be left alone to work it out. The Sultan, however, was not satisfied, and his misgivings can hardly be wondered at. The first military necessity, after the Russians had effected a passage at Sistova, was the defence of the Jantra. Yet Biela, the key of that position, had been abandoned by the Turks without waiting for an attack. So incredible did this wilful abandonment of an admirable position appear to the Russians—so fearful were they that it concealed an ambush—that they occupied, evacuated, and re-occupied the town no less than six times. With a fervent belief in the power of Shumla to arrest the Russians on that side of the Balkans, the Sirdar Ekrem seemed to have resolved to come to blows nowhere with the enemy so long as he could avoid doing so, to concentrate his forces under the forts of the intrenched camp, and to shut himself up there. That was scarcely the plan which might have been expected from a pupil and

devoted student of Molke, although it alone seems fitted to explain the insufficient supply of troops where they were most needed, and the gradual falling back of the scattered fragments of the army on all sides towards Shumla.

Meanwhile the Czarewitch slowly and cautiously advanced, without any fighting of the least importance, and by the 22nd July 40,000 men were in position on the line of the river Lom. The heights on this river might have been easily turned into splendid defensive positions. Indeed the Russians later on there arrested the advance of Mehemet Ali, but no attempt was made by the Turks to fortify them. The only serious skirmish took place near Kadikoi, a village about midway between the Lom and the Rustchuk-Shumla road. A couple of squadrons sent across the Lom to feel the enemy, fell into an ambush of Circassians and had to cut their way out, which they effected with a loss of nine killed and twenty-one wounded. The Circassians in the ardour of pursuit crossed the river, and came to grief in their turn. A battalion of infantry had accompanied the cavalry as far as the Lom, and received the Circassians with a withering fire, which caused them double the loss they had inflicted on the dragoons. A subsequent reconnaissance, under the Arch-duke Vladimir himself, finding Kadikoi deserted, the Cossacks made a bold dash for the Rustchuk-Shumla railway. They struck the line at Güvemli station, which they burnt, then cut the telegraph wires, took up the rails, and destroyed an adjacent bridge on the line with dynamite—thus completing the isolation of Rustchuk, which the retreat of Achmed Eyonb had left to its own resources. Not a man was lost in this brilliant little exploit.

The Russian army on the Lom covered a broad front, although the principal concentration was near the Danube. The right flank of the cavalry extended to Polomarka, a village about forty miles south of the Danube, in the direction of Osman-Bazar; and regiments were studded among the villages all along the left bank of the Kara Lom. A steam ferry was established between Purapan and Pirgos, six or seven miles only above Rustchuk, round which the main body of the Russian forces now began to concentrate. But from the day on which the Russian army approached the Lom, till that on which it commenced its retreat, the investment and siege of the place was not seriously attempted. The

great guns were waited for a long time; and finally, when, at the end of August, they did arrive, instead of being used before Rustchuk, they were forwarded in all haste to Plevna, where there was greater need of them.

The so-called siege of Rustchuk, with which the newspapers of the time so frequently entertained their readers, was, in fact, limited to occasional cannonades between the batteries—erected by the Russians at Giurgevo and Slobodzie on their arrival in Roumania—and the Turkish artillery. These cannonades took place nearly every day with varying degrees of violence, and the night was regularly spent in repairing the damages caused by the day's bombardment.

We have incidentally mentioned in a previous chapter, that about the middle of July the Seraskier, Redif Pasha, and an old, but hale Pasha, named Namyk, were sent from Constantinople to Shumla to investigate Abdul Kerim's strange inaction, which was causing great alarm to the Government. The end of their mission was as unexpected as it was sudden. Namyk Pasha had been secretly instructed to report upon the acts, not only of the aged Generalissimo, but of Redif Pasha as well, whose honesty was looked on with great suspicion; and in consequence of the energetic remonstrances he sent to the Sultan, Mehemet Ali arrived. The account of what followed his appearance seems like an incident from the "Arabian Nights." Namyk, appearing under his real colours, displayed his instructions, and ordered Redif and Abdul Kerim to leave Shumla immediately. But the old General was hungry, and he wished to enjoy a meal before starting on his journey. An hour and a half later, Namyk Pasha asked if Abdul Kerim and Redif Pasha were gone; it was answered that they were still at table. "Is this the way in which the Sultan's commands are executed?" he angrily exclaimed. "Let them be off immediately." So the lonely old Serdar got into a common araba with his companion in disgrace; and with a heavy burden on their hearts they departed in the dark for Shumla-road station, unregretted, unattended, uncared for—a picture of the instability of rank and things in Turkey! Abdul Kerim had been everything a few hours before; all trembled before him. Now his own servants hardly dared to speak to the man at whose feet they had been wont to crouch!

Mehemet Ali had been as unconscious of his

coming elevation as Abdul Kerim of his impending disgrace. He was at Sophia, in command of his Division, when he received a peremptory order to leave at once without a minute's delay; and a special train was waiting to convey him to Constantinople. He was "wanted" by the Sultan; and although he failed to call to mind anything he had done or left undone, which might have brought him into disgrace with his Imperial master, this sudden and unexpected summons somewhat disconcerted him, and filled him with apprehension and doubt. When he arrived at Constantinople he was received by the Grand Vizir and ministers, and the former insisted on his getting into the carriage first. All this was very re-assuring, but still he was kept in ignorance of what had happened—the Grand Vizir refraining, during the half hour's drive to the Palace, from any allusion to the subject. At the Palace he was received with great honour, and his remaining doubts were soon removed; for he was immediately ushered into the Sultan's apartment, and His Majesty, advancing, grasped him cordially by the hand, and told him that in him alone had he full confidence as being the right man to command the central army in Turkey. Mehemet Ali replied that though he felt unworthy of such a trust, he would obey His Majesty's commands with all his heart and soul. The Sultan then told him to make all haste to join the army; that he need not trouble himself about personal matters, as they had been attended to; that a special steamer was in waiting to convey him to Varna; and that as for his family they would be brought to the Palace, and he (the Sultan), would care for them as if they were his own.

The new Commander-in-chief reached Shumlad road station on the evening of Saturday 21st July. He was accompanied by General Strecker (Rashid Pasha), an aide-de-camp of the Sultan and some servants. His promotion had been so sudden that his arrival and mission were both unknown; and but for the accidental circumstance of Nedjib Pasha seeing his wife off by the train, there would not have been a single military man there to welcome the new Generalissimo. The fallen magnates, Abdul Kerim and Redif Pasha, were conveyed to Constantinople by the same steamer which had brought Mehemet Ali to Varna.

Mehemet Ali Pasha who, fresh from his campaign

in Montenegro, had now to encounter the difficulties of the highest command in the Turkish army, was a small, light, active man in the prime of life. His history is a romance. His real name is Jules D  troit, and he was descended from a family of French Huguenots which emigrated to Germany after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He was born at Magdeburg, in Prussia, in the year 1829. When he was fifteen years old, and had passed through the schools of his native town, his father, who was a musician with a very limited income, unable to provide for the further education of the boy, took him to Hamburg, where he was placed on board a German merchant ship. The captain being a cruel and brutal master, and the crew treating the boy equally ill, young D  troit resolved to avail himself of the first opportunity of escape. This occurred while the ship was at anchor in the Bosphorus. D  troit reached the European shore at Balta Liman, and there, it is said, took up his abode with a German. The wife of this German shortly afterwards took the boy, who was singularly handsome, to the house of the famous Ali Pasha. Other accounts say that the boy one day sprang from the ship into the sea and swam towards a beautiful caique, rowed by five or six gaily-dressed oarsmen, which he saw passing. The boat was stopped, and the lad taken in. He had sufficient French to explain the cause of his rash act and seek protection, which was readily granted by the Pasha, who turned out to be no less a person than Ali. However this may be, all accounts agree that Ali Pasha received the young German into his household, and had him regularly instructed. A year later he formally adopted Islamism, taking the second name, Ali, out of affection for his benefactor. In 1849 Ali Pasha placed him in the military college, in which pupils were taught, fed, and supported by the State. Under efficient masters, mostly either French or German officers, the youth displayed considerable ability, and made rapid progress. In 1853 he passed the final examination with great credit, and obtained a lieutenancy. The prospect of speedy promotion was held out to him if he would remain at the school, as an assistant-master; but he preferred active service, and went through the campaign of the Danube against the Russians. He was first under fire at the siege of Silistria, and soon gave proofs of intrepidity and even of daring, winning universal commendation. He once spent

a whole night alone in a captured earthwork. Omar Pasha noticed the conduct of the young officer, and placed him on his Staff; and in this capacity he was present during the Crimean war, and had the opportunity of making the acquaintance of distinguished officers of various nations—English, French, and Italian—at Omar Pasha's head-quarters. Later he took part in the campaigns in Montenegro, Arabia, and Bosnia. He became a colonel in 1863. In 1867 the young officer served with distinction during the insurrection in Crete, under Hussein Avni Pasha, who was assassinated in 1876. In 1873 he was given the chief command of the forces in Thessaly, in order to put an end to the excesses of the banditti which had become intolerable—a perilous duty which several Pashas had declined. Mehemet Ali, now raised to the rank of Brigadier-general, acquitted himself of this difficult task with great ability. Partly by artifice and partly by persuasion, by employing remorseless severity where “examples” were required, by daring attacks, and by skilful operations in combination with the Greek detachments assigned for frontier duty, he was able in a short time to re-establish order. During the Servian war in 1876 he obtained the rank of General of Division, and was intrusted with the chief command at Novi-Bazar, a post of great strategic importance.

The task which the new Commander-in-chief had so suddenly agreed to undertake was, it must be confessed, one of enormous difficulty and terrible responsibility. He found the army tolerably strong in numbers, it is true, but demoralized by constant retreat and want of confidence in its leaders. Before him was a powerful and, as was generally believed, a well-organized hostile army, which had successfully broken through the first line of the defence, if such there can be said to have been, of his predecessor. Moreover, being a foreigner, and the youngest of the Turkish marshals, his appointment was the cause of a considerable amount of jealousy. Achmed Eyoub, belonging to the old narrow school of Turkish officers, entertained special dislike for the new commander, whom he looked upon as the embodiment of all the modern notions on military matters which, to his intensely conservative mind, were so repugnant and so mischievous. Old Turkish ideas of strategy in war against their traditional enemy proscribed attack and recommended defence.

The occasions on which the Turks had taken the offensive in previous wars with Russia could almost be counted on one's fingers. Mehemet Ali, however, held to the theory that the opportunity of giving the first blow, the mere fact of being the first to attack, is in itself an important advantage; and he thought that a soldier who retreats without fighting suffers more demoralization than one who falls back after defeat.

While Redif Pasha possessed the ear of the Sultan, no foreigner, no matter what his rank or ability, had any chance of receiving an appointment at the hands of the Imperial Government, and there can be little doubt that the services of many an excellent officer were lost to Turkey in her hour of need through the infatuation of the Seraskier. His fall, however, was the prelude to a considerable change in the policy which had until then prevailed. Hobart Pasha was for a time given some important work to do, and Mehemet Ali was enabled to indulge his confidence in the value of foreign officers, by giving active employment to his compatriots, Generals Blum and Strecker, who had been hitherto practically shelved; and by calling up Baker Pasha, to whom he telegraphed offering him a post of honour.

The activity and energy of the new Generalissimo formed a remarkable contrast to the almost incredible indolence of Abdul Kerim. The day after his arrival at Shumla the troops were drawn up in front of his tent, and the firman was read to them. It not only appointed Mehemet Ali Commander-in-chief of the forces in Bulgaria, but it conferred on him supreme civil power over the military zone in European Turkey. When the reading was finished, he addressed the troops in terse and emphatic language, saying that he was empowered to raise the meritorious soldier to the rank of general, or to degrade the undeserving, or shoot a traitor, and that he intended exercising his powers. In conclusion, he added that he hoped every soldier was ready, as he himself was, to sacrifice his life for his country. After reviewing the army on the Shumla plateau, Mehemet Ali devoted several days to visiting and inspecting, personally, the different camps, hospitals, ambulances, magazines, depôts of *matériel*, &c.. Marchings and counter-marchings, reviews and inspections, were now the order of the day, till the so lately languid, dispirited legions

of Shumla were stirred with all the fire of martial life, and heard of the deeds of their brothers-in-arms at Plevna with mixed feelings of admiration and envy. As the spirits of the soldiers revived, their health improved; and complete confidence being established in their new chief, the men were soon burning for an opportunity to distinguish themselves under his orders. All ranks began to take *au sérieux* the war hitherto conducted in so careless and negligent a fashion. The patrol duty was now systematically and carefully performed; and as Mehemet Ali had, in addition to his regular army, a considerable force of mounted Bashibazouks and Circassians under his command, he endeavoured to keep them out of mischief as much as possible, by employing them actively in the front against the Cossacks, who spread in all directions before the Russian main body, and masked its movements. The Circassians were particularly useful in this way, and no doubt, with good firm officers, might have been made into a very fine body of light cavalry. As it was, they in their turn hung like a veil round the regular troops, utterly concealing their movements from the Russians, prevented reconnaissances except in force, picked off stragglers, and harassed the enemy's outposts and pickets night and day.

Mehemet Ali also organized strong patrols, which, by traversing the country in all directions, cleared the valley of the Ak-Lom, put an end to the panic among the population, and enabled the crops to be gathered in. This was a great blessing, not only to the inhabitants, but to the 50,000 or 60,000 Mussulman families who had taken shelter within the Turkish lines, and who, abandoned by the powerless authorities, owed their subsistence to the natural resources of the district.

Achmed Eyoub had left a force, mainly cavalry, under Eschreff Pasha, in observation at Torlak, where they were at the mercy of a *coup de main* by the Russians, who occupied Kostanji. Mehemet Ali soon perceived the critical position of this force, and issued an order for it to fall back to Rasgrad, and at the same time sent out a detachment of about 4000 infantry, six guns, and two squadrons of cavalry, along the main road, to cover their right in case of an attack from a considerable body of Russians who were known to be moving about on the south of that road, on the north of which the retiring force would have to march. The covering force was placed

under the command of Aziz Pasha, with instructions to return, keeping a careful look out for the enemy, as soon as he heard that Nuber Eschreff had passed a given point. On the march back, just as the village of Essirdji, which lies off the main road, about nine miles from Rasgrad, was reached, a severe skirmish took place, which, comparatively unimportant in itself, is worthy of notice, as it involved the loss of Aziz Pasha, one of the best generals in the Ottoman army. He deliberately rode to death, and from his conduct previous to and during the engagement there can be no doubt that his sensitiveness had been strained to such a point, through seeing men of Abdul Kerim's stamp leading the country to disaster, and being unable to prevent it, that his brain had given way. The whole affair at Essirdji only lasted about an hour and a half, and was as much a surprise for the Russians as the Turks. The total loss of the latter was 402 killed and wounded, of whom only 215 were wounded. This will give an idea of the closeness of the fighting, which was carried on at one time with only 150 yards between the two opposing bodies; one battalion alone had sixty-four killed and sixty-six wounded. The Russians drew off in considerable haste, and fell back on the Lom.

Mehemet Ali next occupied himself in removing the bulk of the troops from Shumla, and distributing them on the strong line from Rasgrad to Eski-Juma, which he had determined to hold. The battalions were at once employed in throwing up earthworks and digging trenches; and soon, as if by enchantment, the outlines of batteries appeared on the advanced heights before these two towns, which were speedily in a good state of defence. To Rasgrad Mehemet Ali devoted particular attention, not only because this point was the most important and the most threatened, but also because he had no confidence in Achmed Eyoub Pasha, who was commanding there. He much wished to replace him; but Achmed Eyoub was influential among the old Turks, and Mehemet Ali, knowing the jealousy with which he was regarded by many, and having no other support than the fickle favour of the Sultan, dared not risk the consequences of displacing his incapable lieutenant.

All this time the army of the Quadrilateral was receiving a large part of the reinforcements which

Constantinople drew incessantly from the provinces, and, after a short training, despatched to the various armies. Among other troops Mehemet Ali received many of the Zeibeks who, roused to enthusiasm by their Imams, had hastened from the depths of Asia Minor to the defence of the Padishah.

In Montenegro the Turkish troops had adopted the habit of shouting to each other, which they renewed in Bulgaria, as Mehemet Ali was very partial to it. He said it conduced greatly to the keeping up of good spirits among the men. Often in Montenegro, when it was wet and cold, and the men were all huddled together and getting into very low spirits, this shouting was set agoing; and one battalion shouting to another along the sides of the hills, together with their re-echoing sounds, made such a noise that it could be heard for miles, and had the double effect of raising the men's spirits, by breaking the monotony of their unpleasant state, and also somewhat damped the ardour of any enemy who might be in hearing, and who naturally formed an exaggerated idea of their numbers.

The Turkish armies have no commissariat in the usual sense of the word; and with the reckless and dilatory system in practice for supplying their needs, it is a wonder that the soldiers escaped starvation, when in large masses. According to this system, the sustenance of the army lay in the hands of the civil, not the military authorities. The Kaimakan, or Mutasarif, of the nearest town and villages was called upon to furnish a certain number of rations a day. This answered well in large and prosperous districts, but at the time in question none of the districts or towns within reach of Mehemet Ali's army were prosperous. Far from this, they were filled with Mussulman fugitives, who, having already killed and eaten their cattle, were then face to face with the horrors of starvation. It is not surprising that in these circumstances the local governors did not always succeed in meeting the needs of the army. The camp at Eski-Juma over and over again fell short of bread and fodder, and the right wing was frequently as badly off as the left. Strange to say, this miserable living seemed in no way to affect the health or spirits of the men. Mehemet Ali, to whom the interior economy of the army was a matter of no less concern than their operations in the field, made great efforts to remedy this state of things by providing adequate

transport; but affairs were too advanced to admit of serious redress, and to the last his troops had to fight upon rations of nauseous and half-cooked bread, corn, and rice, with occasional allowances of meat. Only the distribution of bread was regular, and saved the troops from starving. This absence of proper organization and foresight in the commissariat and transport services, was one of the secrets of the slow and deliberate movements of the Turks when victory depended upon their celerity. If Mehemet Ali had been able to deliver his skillful and well-directed blows at the attenuated line of the Czarewitch's army with reasonable rapidity, instead of at such comparatively long intervals, the campaign on the Lom would have had very different results.

The Egyptian troops, which had been left in Varna to oppose General Zimmermann's advance, being no longer required there, were called to the front by Mehemet Ali; and about the middle of August Prince Hassan's well-equipped little force arrived at Eski-Juma. A correspondent of the *République Française*, who saw them at Varna, gave an account of their appearance and bearing which expressed in a humorous way an opinion of their fighting qualities that was afterwards fully confirmed. "A few months ago some fine men-of-war brought to Varna several thousands of nice little soldiers with chocolate faces and uniforms of dark blue cloth; they were so pretty, so prim, so well dressed, that one began to hope it would not rain for fear they should melt away. One could have sworn that they had all come out of boxes of toys from the Black Forest. It was natural to suppose that these elegant troops were not intended to take part in the hardships of warfare, for which they seemed no more fitted than a lady of fashion for work in the fields."

The officers of the Egyptian contingent were certainly superior to those of the Turks. The whole of the Staff, including the Egyptians, could speak French—many of them English, German, and Italian; and the transport, ambulance, and hospital arrangements of this small but perfectly equipped army all told of European ideas.

Arrived in camp, the well-shod, well-clad, and well-paid Egyptians looked down with contempt upon the rough Turkish soldiers, most of whom had lost their shoes in the Bulgarian mud, and left shreds of their uniform in all the thickets they had passed through. At working and digging the

Egyptians maintained their superiority over the less active Turks; but when it came to a question of fighting, this brilliant little force proved unequal to the reputation it had gained in other respects.

In spite of the lack of courage on the part of his soldiers, the pretensions of their chief, Prince Hassan, the eldest son of the Khedive, and who had been educated at Oxford, were a source of continual embarrassment to Mehemet Ali, who in this case, as in that of Achmed Eyoub, did not feel sufficient power to take a radical measure.

When the reinforcements had been embodied in the old troops, and the Egyptian contingent brought into line, Mehemet Ali's order of battle was constituted as follows:—The whole army was divided into two corps—the 1st, or Corps of Ras-gral, and the 2nd, or Corps of Juma.

The 1st, with Achmed Eyoub Pasha in chief command, consisted of three complete Divisions, under Fuad, Assuf, and Nedjib Pashas respectively, each sixteen battalions, six squadrons, and four batteries strong; of Hassan Pasha's brigade, six battalions and one battery; of Mehemet Bey's flying column, three battalions, six squadrons, and a half battery; and of Emin Pasha's brigade of cavalry, numbering eighteen squadrons of regular cavalry, a section of horse artillery, and 2000 Circassian horsemen. Altogether, therefore, the 1st Corps comprised fifty-seven battalions of infantry, seven regiments of cavalry (of six squadrons each), fourteen batteries of artillery, and some hundreds of irregular horse.

The 2nd, or Juma Corps, under the command of Prince Hassan, consisted of Ismail Pasha's Division, comprising two brigades, together fourteen battalions (of which nine were Egyptian troops, three Nizams, and two rifles), and four batteries; of Salih Pasha's Division, comprising three brigades, together eighteen battalions, one regiment of cavalry, and four batteries; of Salim Pasha's reserve Division, fifteen battalions and three batteries; of Baker Pasha's flying column, consisting of three battalions, 1000 Circassian cavalry, and three guns; and finally, of the flying columns under Ibrahim Pasha and Mustapha Bey, comprising two battalions of Zeibeks and eight Circassian squadrons. Altogether, the 2nd Corps thus consisted of fifty-two battalions of infantry, fourteen squadrons of cavalry, and eleven and a half batteries of artillery.

Mehemet Ali's whole army, consequently, com-

prised 109 battalions, 56 squadrons, and 25½ batteries, or 153 guns. Taking the battalions as having an average strength of 500 bayonets, and the squadrons 120 sabres, it may be calculated, therefore, that he had, including irregulars, about 70,000 men under his command available for active operations.

The Russians had started with the idea that their principal effort would have to be made upon the Lom, and a glance at the map will show why. On their left flank stood Rustchuk and Shumla, the principal fortresses of the Quadrilateral, and near which the Turks were known to have concentrated their main army. Besides, the valley of the Jantra was the natural route towards the Balkans, and the one which General Gourko had taken for his expedition. On the right wing, on the contrary, no great effort seemed to be necessary, the capture of Nikopol having, it was presumed, sufficiently cleared the ground and strengthened their position in that direction; while Osman Pasha, menaced by the Roumanians at Kalafat, was thought little able to seriously trouble the right wing of the great Russian army.

We have seen in previous chapters how rudely the Russian Staff were undeceived; for just as the Russians, after the taking of Nikopol, were turning all their attention to the left, and moving their army corps in that direction, General Krudener was beaten at Plevna. This unexpected blow at once shattered all their combinations, and completely altered the whole course of the campaign. The corps, which had been moving towards the Lom, was hurried across the country by forced marches to Plevna; and the weakened army of the Czarewitch, instead of besieging Rustchuk and pushing forward briskly to cut off Shumla, was compelled to give up the offensive and confine itself to the passive rôle of defending the valley of the Lom.

The Russian Staff hesitated a long time before it fully realized the necessities of the situation. They were very reluctant to abandon the attack of the Quadrilateral, for it seemed to render a second campaign almost inevitable; since, whatever the result of the fighting on the right wing, the main Turkish positions would remain unimpaired.

Fortunately for the Russians, the Turks were not in a position to profit by the situation. Mehemet Ali was fully occupied, as we have already seen, in reorganizing his troops, and for a time

there seemed something like a tacit suspension of arms on both sides. The Circassians and Cossacks encountered each other occasionally, and a few reconnoitring expeditions were sent out; but no combat of any importance took place.

The same hesitation in yielding to the logic of events which had characterized the conduct of the Russian Staff in regard to the army of the Czarewitch was still more conspicuous in their dealings with General Zimmermann's army in the Dobrukscha. This force was originally intended to aid in the movement against the Quadrilateral, by investing Silistria and masking Varna; but this operation of the Russian extreme left wing had no longer any *raison d'être*, and, in fact, became impossible from the moment that the principal movement against Rustchuk was postponed. As soon as it was recognized that the principal effort had to be made upon the right instead of the left, it would have been better to have evacuated the Dobrukscha altogether, instead of keeping 40,000 men there with no enemy to contend against but the fevers of that unhealthy district.

It is true that a Turkish *coup de main* was dreaded upon the Russian lines of communication, but it would have been quite sufficient to carefully guard the important points with troops. Besides, the Turks had too much to occupy them elsewhere to trouble themselves about making a vigorous movement in this direction, so that only a raid of Circassians was to be feared; and to provide against that danger, however serious it might have been, it was not necessary to keep such a large force idle, while at more important points men were urgently needed. As it was, the inaction of this large force seemed so strange and inexplicable, that it gave rise to the most extraordinary rumours of battles and sieges. In reality, nothing happened. The Russian cavalry dispersed from time to time some wandering troop of Circassians—more bandits than soldiers. The Staff shifted from one town to another. The troops idly moved from Tchernavoda to Kustendji, waiting with impatience the call to action.

On the Lom one of the consequences of the reluctance to frankly accept the necessities of the situation was, that the forces of the Czarewitch remained extended in a dangerously attenuated line, with more than one serious gap, along the positions occupied when the main operations were expected to take place on that side. The news of

the disaster at Plevna found the Russian left wing holding a line extending from Rustchuk almost to Osman-Bazar, where it was connected with the army of the centre. These positions were still held at the end of August, when Mehemet Ali at last took the offensive. The force under the command of the Czarewitch consisted of the 12th and 13th Corps d'Armée. The first, with the 12th Division, held Pirgos—that is, faced Rustchuk—and, with the 33rd Division, the line from Kadikoi to Nisava; while the second, with the 35th Division, held that from Kacelyevo to Opaka, and with the 1st Division the line of Sadana-Popkoi-Yaslar; the reserves of the latter division maintained communications, at Kozarevica, with the left wing of the army of the centre under the Grand-duke Nicholas. Some of the reinforcements which, towards the end of August, began to pour across the Danube, were sent to the Lom, and the effective force of these four divisions (nominally 16,000 men each) may be fairly estimated at from 55,000 to 60,000 men.

The principal defects of this extended line was that some of the divisions were very insufficiently linked together. Between the 33rd and 35th, and exactly opposite Rasgrad, where lay the bulk of the Turkish army, there was a gap of from four to five miles, only feebly defended by some flying detachments installed at Solenik and Kostanzi. Between the 1st Division, which formed the extreme right of the Czarewitch's army, and the 11th Corps at Kozarevica, there was a much wider gap still, for the troops of the 1st Division did not reach beyond Demirkvi on the Osman-Bazar road.

Taking advantage of these weak points, Mehemet Ali's plan was to hurl Suleiman Pasha with his 35,000 or 40,000 men, from Osman-Bazar into the gap between the 11th and 13th Corps, to throw himself with all his army into that between the 12th and 13th, crush the latter between himself and Suleiman, and get to Biela before the 12th Corps. Towards the end of August the moment was extremely propitious for the realization of this grand scheme; the Russians could not spare reinforcements from either of their other armies; and the 12th and 13th Corps and the Division of the 11th, cut off from each other and scarcely numbering 70,000 men, would have had to encounter over 100,000 Turks. What terrible consequences might not have resulted from a Russian disaster! Had

the Russians lost a battle near Biela—only a few miles from the Sistova bridge—the whole course of events must have been very different. But Mehemet Ali seemed afraid to risk much; even abandoned by Suleiman—who was wasting his troops by thousands in fruitless attacks on the Shipka Pass—and reduced to the forces under his own command, he could have tempted fortune with advantage, and have endeavoured to beat the 12th and 13th Corps one after the other. He preferred, however, to press upon the Russian line by partial operations, in which, by skilful combinations, he assured great numerical superiority, and in which he showed at least with what strategical talents he was endowed. Without striking any great blows, he thus pushed back the army of the Czarewitch to the heights which separate the waters of the Banicka-Lom and the Jantra, and at last stopped short, just when his adversary was sufficiently concentrated to offer him the decisive battle which he had hitherto so carefully avoided.

During the month he devoted to preparation, the new Serdar Ekrem did not neglect to try the mettle of his troops; he gave them their "baptism of fire," and prepared them by constant skirmishes for more serious encounters. At the same time he harassed and fatigued the Russians; and by seeming to menace all points at once, left them in uncertainty as to what his plans really were. At one time the garrison of Rustchuk would make sorties, at another a cannonade opened before Rasgrad and Eski-Juma, then a combat would take place in the direction of Osman-Bazar, as if the Turks intended making a serious attempt in the direction of the Balkans and Suleiman Pasha.

Among the points which Mehemet Ali had fortified, on the wooded heights which commanded Eski-Juma, the village of Yenikoi was regarded as the most important. The place had been occupied in July by the Russians; but they had voluntarily abandoned it during the period of hesitation which followed their defeat at Plevna, although its possession would have rendered Eski-Juma untenable by Mehemet Ali, and have enabled the 13th Corps to make a flank movement against Rasgrad in case the Czarewitch decided to attack it. General Hahn, commander of the 13th Corps, had established his head-quarters at Popkoi, which, after Biela, is the most important town in the valleys of the Yantra and the Lom; it is situated on the eastern slope of a charming plateau at the junction

of three roads which lead respectively to Shumla, Rustchuk, and Biela. The fault of the line of defence of which it was the centre, was that all the places through which the line passed, except Karahassankoi, are dominated by higher ground.

When he saw the Turks working busily upon the heights of Yenikoi, General Hahn realized the mistake he had made, and endeavoured to repair it by retaking the position. On the 21st of August the Russian force started from Yaslar in two columns, and succeeded without much difficulty in occupying Kizilar and driving back the Turkish outposts as far as Sarnasufkar and Rassimpachakoi; but the main positions on the heights of Kedi-Ovron, were defended with desperate bravery until troops which had hurried from Eski-Juma arrived, when the Turks assumed the offensive. The heat was terrible; and although the battalions were almost exhausted by a rapid march of several hours, they were immediately led against the enemy. The Russians, shaken by the well-sustained fire of the Turkish artillery, gave way, and the Turks pursued them as far as Kizilar and retook the village. By eight o'clock in the evening all the Russians had recrossed to the left bank of the Lom.

Salih Pasha, then at Eski-Juma in temporary command of the Turkish left wing until the arrival of Prince Hassan, struck by the danger to which the Yenikoi position had been exposed, saw that its possession would continue to be precarious so long as the Russians held Yaslar. He accordingly determined to attack it, and early on the morning of the 22nd a strong Turkish column crossed the Lom, and easily dislodged the two Russian battalions which held the village. General Hahn, now menaced in Popkoi, and seeing how gravely compromised was the situation of the 13th Corps, sent orders to the commander of the 1st Division, General Prokhorow, to retake Yaslar at all costs. The Sophia regiment accordingly attacked at ten o'clock in the evening, and after a hand-to-hand fight succeeded in driving the Turks from the positions they had conquered in the morning. The fusillade was kept up throughout the night—the Turks not having recrossed the Lom; and on the 23d they made a fresh attempt on Yaslar. Under cover of the darkness the whole of the 1st Russian Division had been concentrated on this point, and the Sofia, Neva, and Bolkhow regiments valiantly

sustained three assaults; but Salih Pasha having brought up his whole force, the Russians were unable to resist the fourth attack. They were accordingly obliged to abandon Yaslar a second time, and retired to Sultan-Koi, two miles nearer Popkoi, in order to cover that town.

The capture of Yaslar was a considerable success for the Turks. Not only was Rasgrad freed from the risk of a side attack, but the army of the Czarewitch was in its turn threatened on its right flank; while Mehemet Ali gained some useful information as to the dislocation of the Russian forces, and by means of this victory completed the work of restoring the *morale* of his troops.

He accordingly decided at once to take the offensive, for which he was now completely prepared; the last battalions of the Egyptian contingent having arrived. In order to conceal the real state of his forces as long as possible, rumours had been industriously circulated that Prince Hassan was about to attack General Zimmermann in the Dobrudscha, and make an attempt against the Roumanian railway. These reports not only added to the anxieties of the Russian Staff; but served to disguise for some time, the departure of the Egyptian troops from Varna.

The Eski-Juma Corps was ordered to concentrate at the camp established between Sarnasuflar and Yenikoi, and Nedjib Pasha to proceed from Rasgrad towards Basisler. Mehemet Ali went in person to Sarnasuflar. Before proceeding to describe the arrangements of the Turkish general, it is necessary to give some idea of the country to be fought over, as well as the strength and positions of the forces about to be engaged.

The Turkish line commenced on the right bank of the Kara-Lom opposite Yaslar, at the villages of Kizilar and Kedi-Ovran. The country, starting from the first of these villages, forms an almost uninterrupted succession of escarped heights, at the foot of which winds the narrow Kara-Lom. These heights were fortified along nearly the whole line; some guns were in position at Risim-Pasha-Koi, at several points in front of Sultan-Koi and Popkoi, the last batteries being placed upon the Karatepé hill opposite Gagova. Further on towards Rasgrad, the Turkish line of defence formed a re-entering angle, the fore-post line passing near Basisler which was in the hands of the Russians, and running back as far as Sidolkoi

on the extreme right. The right bank of the Lom passed out of the hands of the Turks between Haidarkoi and Basisler, where the chain of heights extending from Kizilar culminated in the Karatepé. Up to that point the Turkish positions were the most advantageous, as their artillery on the hills was able to completely dominate the enemy's position; but the Karatepé and its spurs is a break in the chain, and the Russian position at Karahassankoi (a village situated a little to the north of the river, upon the slope of a plateau which forces the Lom to take a westerly direction) had a decided advantage, being able to sweep with its guns the undulating plain stretching between Basisler and Sadina, by which the Turkish right must advance to the attack. This plain, at the time we are describing, was covered with immense fields of wheat and maize, as were also the slopes of the hills, and the plateau upon which stands Karahassankoi, excepting some small woods here and there.

The Russian positions commenced at Sultan-Koi, where the 1st Division had been concentrated after the check at Yaslar. Next came Popkoi, the head-quarters of the 13th Corps; the line then approached the Lom and passed through Haidarkoi and Gagova, where General Baranof, commander of the 35th Infantry Division, had his head-quarters. Opposite Gagova the line crossed the Lom, included a piece of wooded ground on the slope of the height behind Karahassankoi, overlooking the river, passed through Karahassankoi and on to Sadina and Kisil-Moura, from eight to ten miles off, where the positions of the 13th Corps terminated. Basisler was also occupied as an advance-post. Karahassankoi, at once the strongest point and the key of the position, was the object of Mehemet Ali's efforts.

For two or three weeks General Leonoff, commander of the 2nd brigade of the 8th Cavalry Division, had been holding this place with a small cavalry force; but having been harassed by continual attacks of small detachments of Turks, he was reinforced on the 28th August by the Karaïsk regiment of infantry of the 35th Division, commanded by Colonel Nazarov, and several field-pieces, increasing the number in position to ten—six being of small calibre. A few rifle pits were dug along the slope, and small batteries erected on either side of the village; and with these feeble forces, numbering only 3000 infantry and 500 cavalry (Loubno hussars and Don Cossacks), pre-

parations were made to defend the line from Karahassankoi to Kisil-Moura against the large Turkish corps known to be in the neighbourhood.

Mehemet Ali disposed his troops for the attack in the following manner:—One brigade of Salih Pasha's Division of the Eski-Juma Corps, under the orders of Assim Pasha, was posted opposite Popkoi to threaten the enemy there and prevent his sending reinforcements to the principal scene of action farther north. Opposite Haïdarkoi, and threatening Karahassankoi with his right wing, Sabit Pasha, an active and enterprising young officer, was stationed at the head of another brigade. Later in the day the Generalissimo sent him a reinforcement of six battalions under the command of Baker and Ali Pashas. Next, to the right and left of Sidolkoi, came one brigade of Nedjib Pasha's Division from Rasgrad, which, under the command of Nedjib himself, was to be the principal attacking force. Assaf Pasha with the other brigade was placed in reserve on the right, awaiting the signal to advance. Nedjib at the head of his brigade was to attack in front, and at a given moment effect a junction before Karahassankoi with Sabit's brigade.

Mehemet Ali's object was to capture Karahassankoi, to turn Haïdarkoi and Popkoi, and thereby to gain the line of the Lom, unless the enemy preferred to retain part of it at the imminent risk of being cut off from his means of retreat. In every way the plan was shrewdly conceived; and the fact that General Leonoff and his heroic little force were left to continue a hopeless struggle all that long summer's day without any movement being made from Popkoi or Gagova to reinforce or support them until too late, shows that either the Russians were curiously mistaken as to the importance of the attack, or that the Commander of the 13th Corps was guilty of almost incredible supineness.

At eight o'clock in the morning of August 29 a Cossack galloped up to General Leonoff to announce that a large number of Circassians were advancing through the woods upon Sadina. Seeing that he was about to be attacked, the general immediately ordered the cavalry to either flank. Two guns of the Cossacks' battery went through the woods on the left into a corn-field. Two heavy guns were posted upon the ridge covered with a growth of shrubs and bushes. Two others occupied a battery nearer the village (Karahassankoi)

on the right. A few cannon shots sufficed to drive off the Circassians; but suddenly the whole hillside became alive with troops, springing, as it were, out of the earth. These were the men of Nedjib's brigade, who had been kept well under cover until this moment. They poured down through the corn-fields upon Sadina under cover of the fire from the batteries on the hills beyond, and the Russians were soon driven from the village, which was set on fire. Meanwhile Sabit's troops, concealed by a long eminence, were slowly advancing, one column towards Haïdarkoi, another upon Karahassankoi. They were preceded by a number of mounted Circassians. When the gunners of the battery behind Haïdarkoi caught sight of them, they at once sent their shells in that direction; and although they fell some fifty yards from the Circassians, it was quite close enough to put them to a hasty and disorderly flight, which provoked the laughter of the Generalissimo himself. The infantry, notwithstanding, advanced steadily under the protection of the guns below the Karatépé until they attained a sheltered position, where they awaited the order to cross the river. The right column executed a similar manœuvre under the fire of the Russian battery south of Karahassankoi. It was now twelve o'clock, and fighting was beginning in real earnest. The gunners soon warmed to their work, whilst the Ottoman troops, whose objective was Karahassankoi, continued to advance and spread out as sharpshooters. The Russian battery at Haïdarkoi soon found that it had enough work on hand, having to sustain fire from two different directions. Still it answered on both sides until about two o'clock, when it was almost entirely silenced. On the right wing a more exciting combat was progressing, for Nedjib Pasha, after having occupied Sadina, resolutely attacked the outworks on the east of Karahassankoi.

The maize stalks, as tall as a man, completely hid the combatants from sight, and it seemed marvellous to hear the noise of battle upon the slopes where no one could be seen; but by the puffs of smoke which marked the line of the fusillade, and the glittering of weapons visible through the spaces here and there, it was possible to follow the vicissitudes of the struggle. At first the Turks gained ground, the Russian soldiers retreating foot by foot, all covered with perspiration and exhausted by the intense heat. An eye-wit-

ness who remained near General Leonoff during the whole day, thus described the critical moment:—"All the guns went to the rear, and the patter of musketry was succeeded by rattling volleys, and the heavy boom of the Turkish cannon coming nearer and nearer made the still air quiver and throb. A pitiless sun poured down upon us, and wherever we went came the hiss of bullets and the whiz of shells. Back across the hillsides towards Gagova we could see the wounded struggling to the rear—stout-hearted fellows all splashed and drenched with blood. All around and in front of us bullets were falling in showers. The dark foliage of the hillsides opposite, the whole crest of the flat ridge in fact, was dotted with puffs of blue smoke, and all about us sprung sudden clouds of dust and earth, showing how well the Turks knew their mark. We anxiously looked towards Gagova for the expected help; for from the moment the ridge was taken our only hope of holding the village lay in the arrival of reinforcements. Two long hours we stayed there, with a constant infantry fire all along in front of us; and at two o'clock there was a welcome pause in the firing, and the more welcome glisten of guns along the road from Gagova. Soon they were with us—only three hundred, to be sure; not enough to fill the gaps already made in the ranks, but all anxious to get in and be at work. They lay down a moment; then, as the patter began on the right, and the word came that help was needed, they moved away merrily and were soon at the enemy in earnest."

Three hundred soldiers of the Morehansk regiment were the only reinforcements that the commander of the 13th Corps sent to 3000 men fighting against an army! This feeble succour, however, served to repulse the first attack of Nedjib Pasha, who was obliged to lead back his troops. A period of calm then followed, which lasted until four o'clock. Sabit profited by it to move his men nearer to Karahassankoi, while Nedjib rallied his troops, and prepared for a fresh attack; but by a singular piece of forgetfulness, which it is difficult to attribute to excitement in such an experienced soldier, he did not call up his reserve brigade, commanded by Assaf. It would almost seem that he was resolved to take Karahassankoi alone, which was impossible, as he soon found out. Sabit succeeded in effecting a junction with the right brigade, and supported by him, Nedjib returned to the charge. This time a whole division attacked

at once; the Turks advanced at the run in a semicircle, which had the lower part of the village for its centre. Mehemet Ali, posted on the central height of the Sakartepé, had until now appeared very cheerful; but he became serious as he watched the progress of the struggle through his field-glass. "Our troops maintain their ground," he cried; "but look, the Russian cavalry are charging them—our men give way—they are repulsed!"

The moment had come to send forward the reinforcements, and Mehemet Ali accordingly ordered six battalions, part of which were commanded by Baker Pasha, to sustain the left wing of the attacking force. These troops advanced rapidly towards Karahassankoi. The Russian battery at Haïdarkoi reopened fire, and succeeded in throwing a shell which knocked over several men, and killed General Baker's horse; but the Turkish battery on the Karatepé now took part in the combat, and fired so brilliantly that in less than twenty minutes it had dismounted one gun and reduced the Russian battery to silence. The reinforcements then crossed the plain and joined Sabit.

The third attack upon Karahassankoi began at half-past five, when three brigades and a half charged simultaneously; Assim Pasha took the Russian position in flank by the plateau, Nedjib and Sabit made another front attack, and Assaf, engaging this time, charged upon the extreme right. Just as the troops were advancing a Russian brigade appeared in the distance on the Biela road, coming to the assistance of General Leonoff. Baker Pasha immediately advanced in its direction, and curiously enough, the presence of his small force south of the village, and threatening the enemy's flank and line of retreat, was sufficient to arrest the progress of the brigade, which stopped on the road behind the village, and was content with opening fire with its artillery upon the aggressors, so that the courageous little garrison of Karahassankoi remained alone until the end. It still held out for upwards of an hour, but was then compelled by overwhelming numbers to retreat; and at seven o'clock in the evening the troops of Nedjib, Sabit, and Assaf occupied Karahassankoi; and two battalions of Egyptians crossed the Lom, drove the Russian riflemen out of Haïdarkoi, and occupied the village.

The left of the 13th Corps was thus turned, and the gap laid open in conformity with Mehemet

Ali's plan. The possession of the height of Karahassankoi by the Turks rendered the Russian positions at Opaka and Gagoval untenable. The Czarewitch, whose head-quarters were then at Hodjekikoi, arrived two days after the battle, and immediately appreciating the situation, ordered the 35th Division to fall back upon Polomartza. Such was the immediate strategic result of the engagement. As trophies, the Turks had taken one cannon, four ammunition waggons, nearly 2000 rifles, and a large quantity of luggage and provisions. They lost about 500 men; among the wounded was Major Yagnine, a member of the Polish legion, seventy-one years of age, who at Karahassankoi had taken part in his twenty-eighth encounter with the Muscovite, the hereditary enemy of his nation. The losses of the Russians were about equal to those of the Turks, and were thus large in proportion to the smallness of their force.

The operations of his left wing having perfectly succeeded at Karahassankoi, Mehmet Ali resolved to bring up his right wing from Rasgrad to the line of the Kara-Lom—the provisional front of his army. The victory of Karahassankoi, in forcing back the left wing of the 13th Corps, was a step towards the separation of the two Russian *corps d'armée*, which was one of the aims of the Turkish Generalissimo; in order to complete it, it was necessary to force back the right wing of the 12th Corps. This wing was at Kacelyevo and Ablava, and consisted of the 33rd Infantry Division, and the 1st brigade of the 12th Cavalry Division—Lieutenant-general Baron Driesen being in command of the whole.

As it was his custom to leave nothing to chance, and never to fight without making sure of a numerical superiority, Mehmet Ali sent back to his right wing the troops which had been withdrawn from it for the fight at Karahassankoi, and further reinforced it by Reschid Pasha's brigade of Egyptians, which he detached from the left wing. Further, in order to prevent the 12th Russian Infantry Division, which formed the left wing of the 12th Corps, from leaving its positions opposite Rustchuk and reinforcing the troops at Kacelyevo, he ordered Achmet Kaiserli, commander of the fortress, to make a sortie against Kadikoi. This was the most important of the many sorties of the Turks in this direction, and led to a severe skirmish which

lasted nine hours. The Turks, after taking Kadikoi, were at last compelled, by the arrival of strong Russian reinforcements, to fall back under the guns of the fortress.

The Rasgrad Corps commenced its movement on the 2nd September. Early on the morning of that day Fuad Pasha marched towards the Lom with fifteen battalions. This force constituted the head of the column, and was destined to make the attack. The rest of the army, commanded by Achmed Eyoub and Nedjib Pashas, followed at some distance, and was to act as a reserve in case of need. Fuad camped at Esserdji on the night of the 2nd; the next day he pushed on to Cerovtza, hoping to be able to go straight to Solenik. But he encountered an impassable wooded district, and was obliged to ascend as far as Kostanzi and follow the valley of the Solenik, a tributary of the Kara-Lom; reaching Solenik in the evening, where Achmed Eyoub and Nedjib soon rejoined him.

On the 4th the Turks began to deploy, and the Belgorod Lancers, who were performing outpost duties, were obliged to fall back upon the principal positions—harassed in their retreat by clouds of Circassians. Ogarchin, Bekirin-Yenikoi, Perovtza and Motssevo—villages forming a semi-circle in front of Kacelyevo and Ablava—were then successively occupied by the Turks; and in the afternoon, when they saw batteries being constructed at Ogarchin, the Russians could no longer have any doubt that they were about to be attacked. Baron Driesen then sent off to the head-quarters for reinforcements, and the Neva regiment, detached from the 13th Corps, and the Koporie regiment, fresh from Russia, were despatched to him; but only part of these troops arrived in time to share in the engagement at Ablava on the following day.

The Kacelyevo position, situated on the right bank of the Kara-Lom, was protected by some considerable works forming three lines of defence, and occupied by a battery of artillery, two battalions of the Bender regiment, and three squadrons of the 12th Dragoons, the whole under the command of General Arnoldy. The position was important as it covered the road across the Lom, and barred the passage of the river to the Turks. The bulk of the Russian forces were, however, at Ablava.

General Arnoldy made the following dispositions during the night of the 4th:—Six guns, supported

by two companies of the 2nd battalion of the Bender regiment, were posted on a mamelon in the first line, and the three other companies of the battalion established themselves in the rows of shelter trenches on the slope of the height. The 3rd battalion of the Bender regiment was placed on the right flank, with its rifle company deployed as skirmishers on either side of an earth-work, armed with the two remaining guns of the battery. The commander of the dragoons was ordered to cover the left flank of the position with his three squadrons.

Mehemet Ali's general plan of attack very much resembled that at Karahassankoi. Sabit Pasha moved with a brigade upon Ogarehin, and menaced the right flank of the enemy; Fuad Pasha aligned his fifteen battalions in front on some heights having almost the same elevation as those occupied by the Russians; and Achmed Eyoub and Nedjib Pashas were behind him. The Turkish general had also conceived the brilliant idea of sending Reschid Pasha, with his brigade, to effect a turning movement. Having started during the night, it was intended that he should arrive at the critical period of the attack, fall upon the flank of the enemy, and cut off his line of retreat by Stroko. Unfortunately the movement was very indifferently executed. Fuad Pasha was not informed; and as Reschid Pasha did not know the hour at which the attack would take place, the result was that the turning brigade arrived when there was nothing left to turn. As at Karahassankoi, the right wing alone was to deliver the attack, the rest of the army being destined to hold in check any Russian reinforcements that might be brought up.

At six o'clock in the morning (September 5) the Turkish columns began to show themselves in front of the battery at Kacelyevo; half an hour later two battalions of the Kherson regiment came to reinforce General Arnoldy, and were placed in reserve, one on the right, the other on the left. At seven the Turkish artillery opened fire against the Russian battery with great effect; many men and horses were placed *hors de combat*, and the Captain in command was mortally wounded. After a long cannonade had been maintained by the Turkish batteries, in which there were ultimately fifty guns in line in front of Kacelyevo and Ablava, Fuad's columns began to advance, preceded by three strong lines of skirmishers.

General Arnoldy first moved back his battery

of 4-pounders, and placed it higher up the slope near a battery of 9-pounders, which his aide-de-camp, Salomirsky, brought up about half-past ten, as well as a third battalion of the Kherson regiment and three sotnias of Cossacks. The Turkish infantry, anxious to emulate the success of their comrades at Karahassankoi, advanced bravely against the first Russian line of defence, and after a struggle, in which they lost a large number of men, succeeded in taking it. Seeing that he had to deal with an enemy four times more numerous than his own force, and who was in a position to press him on both flanks, the Russian commander decided to move back his troops, endeavouring to hold the second line as long as possible, so as to gain time to carry off the wounded, and remove the guns from the position. While the troops were falling back upon the second line, the Turkish cavalry attempted to turn their left flank, but were successfully charged by the Cossacks and dragoons. The former engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle, fighting principally with the lance, and the Turks took to flight when their officers, who were in front, had been killed. In the ardour of pursuit the Cossacks encountered some infantry, whose fire emptied many saddles, and made them fly in their turn.

The Russian infantry installed themselves in the rifle pits and trenches of the second line, and with their fire covered the withdrawal of their guns, which were sent back along the Ostritza road; the commander of the 9-pounder battery being instructed to choose a suitable position upon that road to check any further movement of the enemy.

The last troops left in the position were a battalion of the Kherson regiment, commanded by Major Gaponow, who was ordered to hold out to the last extremity. About two o'clock, after having fought six hours against much superior forces, and endured the heavy and continuous fire of the Turkish batteries, the whole of the detachment definitely quitted the position at Kacelyevo. Major Gaponow repulsed a last charge of the Turks with the bayonet, and fell back in the most perfect order towards Ostritza. General Arnoldy himself, with the dragoons, covered the retreat upon Kara-Verbovka of the Kherson and Bender regiments, which were encumbered with a large number of wounded. The 3rd battalion of the Bender regiment, however, which had

occupied the right, was closely pressed by the Turks, and being cut off from its line of retreat, was obliged to fall back upon Ablava; to which place the Cossacks also retreated, and arrived in time to take part in the combat there. Reschid Pasha, as we have already stated, arrived too late to cut the road, and was only able to capture some waggons and a large ambulance carriage.

A little before mid-day Baron Driesen, who had been unable to spare any more troops from Ablava for fear of being attacked there, learnt the arrival of the Koporic and Neva regiments, and decided that he could then, without danger, send further reinforcements to Arnoldy's aid. Accordingly the Tiraspol regiment and a battery of artillery, under Colonel Vlassenko, rapidly descended the heights, forded the Kara-Lom, and advanced towards Kacelyevo, supported by the fire of two batteries, which threw shrapnel against the dense masses of the Turks. When the reinforcements came up the position had already been abandoned, but their arrival had the effect of stopping the Turkish pursuit.

At two o'clock it was universally considered that the day's fighting was over. The battle, although on a much less extended front than that of Karahassankoi, had been much more murderous: Fuad Pasha had lost over 1100 men. But the Generalissimo's end had been gained, and without having had occasion to engage either Sabit or Achmed Eyoub, he had taken Kacelyevo and dislodged the Russians from the right bank of the Lom. The troops were already preparing to encamp, when Ibrahim Pasha, one of Sabit's officers, impatient at not having taken part in the battle, threw some battalions across the Lom, and placed himself at their head in order to capture alone the Russian positions at Ablava. The troops which occupied them, although they had not been engaged, had suffered heavily from the fire which the Turkish artillery had kept up all day; so that such an attack was not so foolish as it seemed to the Turkish staff.

Ibrahim Pasha and his battalions climbed the hill in spite of the violent fire of the Russian tirailleurs posted among the vines, reached Ablava, drove out the Russians, and occupied the village. Beyond Ablava fresh heights arose, the sides of which were also covered with vines, amidst which the Bessarabian regiment was posted, and three Russian batteries were in position on the summits.

Ibrahim Pasha continued his advance, hoping that, in presence of the success which he had just obtained, reinforcements would be sent him. But Mehemet Ali believed there were two divisions at Ablava, and feared that if he attacked them in such a strong position he might compromise the day. Events seemed to prove that he was wrong, and that he displayed an excess of prudence. At any rate, Ibrahim, left to himself, grasped victory for a moment, and compelled the Bessarabian regiment to give way.

"On returning from the right," said Baron Driesen in his report, "I saw these soldiers in retreat, and I said to them—"The true sons of Russia never yield; in the name of the Emperor, of glory, and of the honour of the Russian arms, forward, my children! Drummers, beat the charge! Follow me, my brave fellows! Hurrah!" In the twinkling of an eye the soldiers retraced their steps. I led them as far as the central battery, and then handed them over to General Timofeiew, who, with General Korevo, marched at their head until the Turks had been repulsed. The Koporic regiment joined the Bessarabians, and with a shout of hurrah sprang forward with the bayonet. In spite of the tremendous fire of the enemy's artillery, and of the infantry sheltered among the vines, our troops overthrew the Turks and drove them back to the Lom, and up the hills on the other side of that river."

The Turks lost another 150 men in this escapade of Ibrahim's, which raised their total loss to about 1300. The Russians on their side had ten officers and 288 men killed, and 40 officers, including General Doudinsky, and 976 men wounded; which made the engagement of the 5th September the most murderous of the Lom campaign.

Whilst the right wing of the Turkish army was attacking Kacelyevo, the left wing was making a move towards Popkoi. The 1st Division of the 12th Corps, which occupied this position, hampered with a quantity of artillery taken with a view to an eventual attack upon Eski-Juma, had two lines of retreat—the road from Popkoi to Tirnova, and another running from Popkoi to Biela through Opaka, Kreptse, Orendjik and Sinankoi. The object of the Turkish left wing was to render the retreat of the Russians by this latter route impossible, and to prevent their joining the 12th Corps; but owing to Prince Hassan it completely failed. The son of the Khedive was on the best terms with

the Sultan; and Mehemet Ali, obliged to conciliate him, had given him the command of the left wing, hoping, however, that he would have the prudence to commit the real direction of it to Salih Pasha who commanded under him. But his Highness had no such idea, and compromised the movements of the army at pleasure in the most critical moments.

Salih's plan was very simple; he wished to drive the Russians from Popkoi, while part of Sabit Pasha's brigade, which had moved to the left of its position on the previous day, and now occupied the heights between Bekirin-Yenikoi and Karahassankoi, was to menace their retreat to Biela, and throw them back upon the Tirnova road. On September 6, at eleven in the morning, Salih Pasha vigorously attacked Popkoi; his batteries commanded the village, and shelled the Russian infantry, while the Turks, protected and supported by their artillery, advanced in good order on the right and left, and forced the Russians to fall back behind the village. They were beginning to retreat at Popkoi, as they had done at Karahassankoi, but all at once the attack ceased; Prince Hassan, it appears, judged it inadvisable to go farther.

The next morning the Russians began to evacuate their positions, retiring towards Biela. Salih Pasha was fully able and ready to fall upon their rear and inflict serious loss upon them. But Prince Hassan hesitated again; the Sarnasufkar positions were excellent, and it would be a pity to abandon them! He ended by putting his veto upon the operations, and the Russians filed tranquilly towards Biela with arms and baggage. From that time there was secret anger in the camp, and discontent among the soldiers, who asked each other why they had been prevented from falling upon the enemy when he was in flight.

Salih Pasha, indignant, immediately informed Mehemet Ali, who arrived the next day. All the Generalissimo carried out himself succeeded, but his own lieutenants took it upon themselves to render his success useless. Suleiman Pasha who had persisted with mad obstinacy in his attack on the Shipka, was, after the enormous losses he had sustained, incapable of rendering any assistance; the incapacity of Prince Hassan compromised the operations of the left wing, and the Commander-in-chief seemed everywhere powerless to make himself obeyed. When he arrived at Shumla in July he had reason to believe himself invested with the most extensive powers, an illusion

which was now dispelled. Suleiman Pasha had his party at Constantinople, and he profited by it to disobey the orders of the Generalissimo, play his own game, and betray the interests of his country. As to Prince Hassan, the Sultan had a particular friendship for him; and courageous indeed must have been the man who should have ventured to interfere with him. What could the foreigner, Mehemet Ali, do in the midst of these intrigues, with nothing but his talents to recommend him? Up to the 6th September, Mehemet Ali's tactics had been simple and logical; but from the time of the Russian retreat from the line of the Karalom, which followed the battle of Kacelyero, he hesitated, displayed want of enterprise, and evidently had no well-arranged plan. The lack of cordial co-operation on the part of his lieutenants, to which we have just alluded, must have tended to make the Turkish Generalissimo despair of successfully executing any great combined movement; while the want of organization, as understood in European armies, which made a rapid concentration of troops almost impossible, must not be overlooked. But even making all due allowance for the difficulties under which Mehemet Ali laboured, we are forced to the conclusion that he did not know how to profit by his victories.

Before him lay the army of the Czarewitch, unskilfully posted along a much too extended line. In these circumstances the Turkish general had three alternatives before him, all equally practicable, and either of which was certain to produce immense results:—

1. To mass his troops in the centre, pierce the Russian line near Biela, and cut off the enemy's force at Tirnova.

2. To deliver a blow with all his force on the left, with Tirnova for his objective, oblige the Russians to make an immediate and difficult change of front, and at the same time inclose the Russian forces in the Shipka.

3. To concentrate his troops on his right, march from Rustchuk along the Danube, and cut off all the Russian communications with Roumania.

Hitherto Mehemet Ali had manœuvred so as to prevent the Russians discovering his plan of campaign; and at the time of which we are speaking his army was less than twenty miles from both Biela and Pirgos, and not more than forty from Tirnova.

It was therefore quite feasible to unite into a single army the various Turkish divisions, and march boldly towards the object chosen, whichever it might be. In case of defeat retreat was assured; for the Russians were too fully occupied before Plevna to make a serious advance in any other direction, as the movements of the Czarewitch already showed.

Here, then, was an opportunity worthy of a great general. Victorious, Mehemet Ali might perhaps have terminated the campaign; defeated, he had still the certainty of being able to fall back on the Quadrilateral. He did not, however, rise to the occasion, but sought to weary out the Russians, to wait for winter, and to maintain the *statu quo*. He hesitated to strike one of those decisive blows which end a campaign; and by confining himself to the defensive, foredoomed his own comparative failure.

After wasting several valuable days in uncertainty, Mehemet Ali, on 13th September, at last decided to execute a converging march upon Biela, less to pursue the enemy, than to occupy the ground abandoned by him. The right wing, under Achmed Eyoub, was directed upon the rear of the 12th Corps at Trestenik; the centre, under Assaf Pasha, advanced upon Sinankoi; and he himself, remaining on the left wing to watch Prince Hassan, marched towards Biela.

From this time the opinion began to gain ground that the Turkish army could not advance much further, and would soon return to its old position at Sarnasullar and Rasgrad. And, in truth, the opportunity of attempting anything had passed, and this forward movement was only made to satisfy the soldiers, who knew they had just beaten the Russians and could not understand why they should not pursue them.

The Czarewitch, after the two engagements near Karahassankoi, had with great perspicacity perceived the inconvenience of having his two corps scattered along a line of nearly fifty miles—from Rustchuk to Yaslar; and as his army was restricted to a purely defensive rôle, since all Russia's powers of aggression were at this time directed against Plevna, he did not hesitate a moment before ordering a concentration on the rear. From the 6th September, although the Ablava engagement had been considered a success, he ordered the complete abandonment of the Kara-Lom line, and a general retreat to that of the Jantra. Thanks to

the embarrassments which paralysed Mehemet Ali, the retreat was not only not a rout, but was simply a strategical movement executed with as much ease as a peace manœuvre.

When the Turks advanced the Russians were already occupying their new positions. There was only one encounter at Sinankoi, where the Russian centre, pressed a little too closely by Assaf Pasha, tried to disentangle itself by pushing back the Turkish lines. On the 14th September the Russian troops crowned the heights on the left bank of the Banička-Lom, near Banička and Goluburnar, and began to descend in the direction of Sinankoi. The loss of this point by the Turks must have resulted in the retreat of their centre, and their left wing, under Prince Hassan, would thus have been dangerously isolated. But Assaf, who at first had only twelve battalions and five batteries, occupied a very strong position. Half a league south of Sinankoi there is a little plateau almost triangular in shape, and the Russians from Banička tried to carry this height, which was the key of the Turkish positions. But their assaults were fruitless; and when, after an hour's fighting, Sabit Pasha hurried up with a division, six battalions of which he sent against the front of the enemy and the rest upon their flank at Goluburnar, thus threatening their line of retreat, the Russians retired. Although in reality beaten, the Russians none the less obtained the result sought. Mehemet Ali had relieved the pressure on their centre by concentrating his troops on his left wing; and the country in the neighbourhood of Sinankoi was so stripped of troops that part of the 26th Infantry Division, which had just arrived from Russia under the orders of General Baron Dellingshausen, was able to carry a reconnaissance as far as Polomarza without meeting any resistance.

With the combat at Sinankoi ended the successful period of Mehemet Ali's operations. We have already shown through what unfavourable circumstances the Generalissimo's first successes had not the brilliant results which might have been anticipated from them; and on the 15th September the situation of the Czarewitch's army was better than it had been three weeks before, when it occupied a front of nearly fifty miles with a gap by which the enemy might have cut it in two. Now it was strongly intrenched on the plateau between the Banička-Lom and the Jantra; the head-quarters of the 12th Corps were at Ablanova-

Jali, those of the Czarewitch at Dolny-Monastir, and of the 13th Corps at Koprivea. The front of the army—from Metchka to Cerkovna—was only twenty-five miles in extent, and was massed in such a way as to be able to act together in case of an attack; while at Cerkovna and Chairkoi it was in immediate contact with Schakowski's 11th Corps.

These concentrations, and the reinforcements which now began to arrive, rendered the forces of the Czarewitch equal to those of Mehemet Ali. Certainly the possibility of a great battle at less than fifteen miles from Biela and thirty-five from Sistova remained a very serious eventuality; but at least the chances of defeat were infinitely less than before, and the retreat could have been conducted in good order.

Mehemet Ali now found himself in an extremely embarrassing position. He had abandoned all hope of successfully attacking the army of the Czarewitch, and if he had been at liberty to act as he pleased, would certainly have fallen back upon his former positions. But the Council of War at Constantinople would not have been able to understand that prudential reasons could make it advisable to abandon the idea of forcing the enemy's positions, immediately after a successful advance. The unfortunate general thus felt that if he retreated he was certain of being reprimanded, and if he advanced he felt almost equally certain that he should be beaten. In the midst of his perplexities Mehemet Ali received an imperative order from Constantinople, which put an end to his hesitation. "Attack Biela," was the command. He resigned himself to his fate, and resolved to force the Russian line at Chairkoi, and, if successful, to pierce by Draganova as far as the Jantra, and so turn the right of the Biela position. By advancing in this direction he would still be able to threaten Tirnova, and stretch a hand to Suleiman Pasha, should that general at last condescend to cross the Balkans. Chairkoi was the point of junction between the 11th Corps and the army of the Czarewitch; and there were there at this time part of the 32nd Division of the 11th Corps, of the 1st Division of the 13th, and of the 26th Division of infantry—altogether two and a half brigades of infantry, and a brigade of cavalry, the whole under the command of Lieutenant-general Tatischev, commander of the 11th Cavalry Division.

Mehemet Ali's plans savoured of his newly acquired

uncertainty and want of heart. For the first time he neglected to assure himself of numerical superiority at the point of attack, and the battle, badly planned, was badly carried out. The attacking troops were not supported, the reserves never moved; twice the Turks seemed to have victory in their grasp, and twice it escaped them, because the assailants were left to themselves in the face of an enemy incessantly reinforced.

The Russian positions, which formed an angle from Chairkoi to Beg-Verbovka, were covered by two small streams, the Raidajik and the Jordan, called also the Cerkovna rivulet. The Russians had fortified themselves by digging rifle-pits and forming some intrenched batteries. The slope in front of the position was very steep, and it was further protected at several points, especially on the centre and left, by woods and thickets. The village of Beg-Verbovka, situated opposite Cerkovna, was considered the key of the line. There were posted the troops of General Gorschkow's Division, of which the Kursk and Rylysk regiments, which had already distinguished themselves before Plevna, formed part. The Russian forces amounted to between 12,000 and 14,000 men, whilst Mehemet Ali only brought ten battalions into action.

The Turkish troops (part of Mehemet Ali's left wing) were massed at Cerkovna, and deployed in the woods opposite Verbovka, Kodjabounar, Yurukler, and Chairkoi. Their reserves were at Oselkovo. The rain delayed the attack for several days; but on the 21st September the sun rose brilliantly and soon began to dry the roads. Mehemet Ali made his arrangements early, so that by eleven o'clock the troops, the ambulances, and the ammunition reserves were all in the positions assigned to them. Ten battalions of Prince Hassan's Army Corps took part in the engagement. Hassan Pasha's brigade formed the reserve. Three battalions under Salim Pasha were to attack the Russian right wing, four under Rifaat Pasha the centre, and three more, led by Ali-Riza, the left wing. The attack failed at the latter point on account of the superiority of the enemy, and because the nine Egyptian battalions sent as reinforcements were delayed by the state of the roads, and did not take part in the struggle. Mehemet Ali's object in attacking along the whole line was to find out the enemy's weak point, and then throw upon it the strong reserves which he kept

in the rear; but as we have said, these reserves were of no use.

The Russians, warned several days previously by the movements of the Turks at Cerkovna, held themselves in readiness to receive them at any moment, and had placed sixteen pieces of artillery in battery to respond to any attack. On the morning of the 21st their troops were disposed as follows:—A battalion of the 101st Perm infantry was at the fore-posts, occupying a wood in advance of the centre of the position. A squadron of dragoons occupied a height on the right opposite the village of Yurukler; a squadron of lancers, the village of Verbovka; a battalion of the 125th Koursk infantry regiment, the trenches on the right flank of the position; one battalion of the Rytsk infantry, with a battery of artillery guarded the centre; and a battalion of the Neva infantry, with another battery of artillery, held the entrenchments on the left flank. The rest of the troops (eight battalions, six squadrons, twenty-four pieces of foot and six of horse artillery), were bivouacking at Chairkoi.

At eleven o'clock the battle commenced with a general salvo from the five Turkish batteries at Cerkovna, which continued firing without intermission until one in the afternoon. Their fire was principally directed against the Russian batteries on the left, in order to produce the impression that the attack would take place on that side; but General Tatishchef was not to be deceived by this ruse, and he refrained from putting the troops at the bivouac in motion until the enemy's intentions were made clear. During this time the Turkish columns were massing near Cerkovna under the fire of the battery in the Russian centre, whose accurate aim did considerable execution among them.

The first attack took place on the right. At one o'clock Salim Pasha's skirmishers deployed on a wide front, and supported at a short distance by the main body of the column, began to debouch from the woods near Yurukler, and turning this village, north and south, drove back the squadron of dragoons, and attacked the 1st company of the Perm regiment, whose tirailleurs immediately fell back on their reserves. Although he saw himself almost completely cut off from the rest of the Russian troops, the captain, Prince Tchelokaiew, did not abandon his post. Having recalled his skirmishers, he opened fire on the Turks; but they

continued to press up the hill occupied by the company, and turned its right flank.

The enemy's intention now appeared plain to General Tatishchef; on his left the Turks had not yet moved; in the centre they were contenting themselves with making a demonstration in order to retain the troops concentrated in front of Cerkovna, in their position. The Russian Commander therefore believed that the real attack was to be on the right, whither he immediately betook himself, and made the following dispositions to frustrate Salim Pasha's turning movements. In the first place, the 3rd battalion of the Koursk regiment, and a part of a battery of artillery, were advanced along the Yurukler road to support the 1st company of the Perm regiment; secondly, Colonel Vick commanding the Riga dragoons, received orders to move, with two pieces of horse artillery, in the direction of the village of Kilitchliar, and take the enemy in flank; thirdly, the regiment of lancers and the four other pieces of horse artillery were placed on a height to the south of Chairkoi in order to support the dragoons; and lastly, four guns were sent to occupy a battery on the right.

Lieutenant Mikhailow moved his guns up the Yurukler road at a brisk trot, and passing the line of skirmishers of the 1st company of the Perm regiment, saw the chain of Turkish skirmishers only 150 yards in front. He, however, coolly unlimbered and commenced firing shrapnel upon them. There was a moment of hesitation, and then the Turks rushed boldly forward upon the Russian guns. But at the same moment Major Dombrovsky hurried up a battalion of the Koursk regiment, who, bringing their bayonets to the charge, gave a cheer, and drove off the Turks without firing a shot.

Meanwhile Colonel Vick and his dragoons had galloped a couple of miles, when, instead of turning Salim Pasha's flank, they found themselves in the presence of a fresh body of skirmishers advancing through a thick copse with the view of turning the Russian extreme right. The dragoons were received with a murderous fusillade; but a couple of squadrons dismounted, and under their protection the two pieces of horse artillery bravely took up a position on the flank of the enemy's reserves and opened fire. The Turks hesitated a moment, then having received reinforcements, moved forward again and drove the dragoons back in the direction of Chairkoi.

Apprised of his position by Colonel Vick, General Tatischev immediately reinforced him with a fresh battalion of the Koursk regiment; and seeing the main body of Salim's force getting nearer Yurukler, he also sent two fresh battalions in that direction with a battery which General Gorskow took into action, whilst the General-in-chief himself hastened to the left flank, which Ali-Riza had just attacked. Until the arrival of the fresh troops, the position of the 3rd Rylsk battalion, which had to bear the brunt of the fighting on the right, was very critical. Salim Pasha constantly sent fresh troops to support those which had charged, and the battalion was almost enveloped by them. General Gorskow's arrival restored something like equilibrium, and a desperate struggle took place, close to Yurukler, upon a height which was repeatedly taken and retaken. If Mehemet Ali had sent part of Hassan Pasha's brigade to Salim's assistance, the Russian right would undoubtedly have been forced back; but, as we have already said, on this day it seemed as if all the military qualities he had hitherto displayed were dormant. He seemed to have no confidence, and acted almost as if, in his opinion, the battle was lost before it took place.

General Tatischev, on the contrary, showed much ability in this engagement. Having his reserves close at hand, and keeping his finger, so to speak, on the pulse of the battle, which was fought on a comparatively narrow area, he was able to send forward support just when it was needed. Seeing that Gorskow was not strong enough to repulse the enemy, he sent him another battalion of the Perm regiment. On the arrival of this help the Russian infantry, supported by the fire of a dozen pieces of artillery, rushed forward with such impetuosity that the Turks fled in disorder to Yurukler. They were not even able to rally in that village, but without attempting to resist farther, retired upon Kassalevna, on the east of Chaikoi. At this period Colonel Vick, who had at last thrown back the Turks in front of him upon Kilitchliar, rejoined General Gorskow. The soldiers were eager to pursue, but General Gorskow decided to hold them back, and await the result of the struggle taking place on the left.

About two in the afternoon, when the attention of the Russians was concentrated on their right, in consequence of Salim's attack, Mehemet Ali prepared to attack their left and centre. On the

left the heights occupied by the Russians descended towards the river by a series of terraces, at the foot of which the water had worn some ravines. Most of the slopes were covered with vines, among which was posted a squadron of the Tchougoniew lancers before Verbovka. About three o'clock Ali-Riza's battalions defiled from a wood at a point opposite the extreme Russian left, and began to cross the valley. They had accidentally hit upon the weakest point of the line, and in ten minutes had cut the enemy's left and completely separated the squadron from the infantry posted upon a height at the side. Protected by the numerous ravines, the Turks advanced rapidly behind the vines occupied by the lancers, and tried to surround them. The first rank of the lancers then dismounted and made good use of their carbines, while the second fell back on a terrace, and did the same until the first had ridden through them and taken up fresh ground. This manœuvre was repeated from terrace to terrace, until the arrival of the anxiously expected infantry.

Mehemet Ali, surprised at the weakness of the Russian left, and perceiving that Ali-Riza had the fate of the day in his hands if he could only press his attack vigorously, resolved to reinforce him. He accordingly sent to the battalions in reserve and ordered them to fall upon the enemy's left in a mass, in support of Ali-Riza. But they were a great distance from the field of battle; in spite of the fineness of the day the roads were still very heavy, and the troops could not come up in time. Here was Mehemet Ali's grave fault, and his previous well-merited reputation for prudence makes it difficult to understand his dispositions on the present occasion, when his arrangements were so bad that he was unable to utilize his reserves.

The Russian lancers resisted for half an hour; but they were getting weaker and weaker, and their ammunition was also beginning to run short. The battery which supported them was itself unable to hold its ground any longer; its commander had received a contusion, and two of his officers were wounded; two guns were dismounted, and the battery had sustained serious losses in men and horses. At this critical moment General Tatischev arrived on the left flank; he immediately replaced the severely-tried battery by a fresh one, and sent a battalion of the Neva regiment to the aid of the lancers.

The combat was obstinate; but fortunately for the Russians, their left was able to maintain its positions; for if the attack had succeeded, and the Turks had gained possession of this position, the rear of the whole line of camps and hospitals would have been open to them, and the day, instead of being a success, would have ended in a disaster. The heroic resistance of a single squadron of lancers had saved the detachment.

The Turks were obliged to descend again into the valley; but Ali-Riza, engaging his last battalion, led them to the assault, and the heroic column actually succeeded in penetrating into the village of Verbovka. Happily for General Tatishchef, however, the Viatka regiment, which he had been expecting since the morning, came up at this moment, and he was able to throw a couple of fresh battalions into the *mêlée*, which decided the issue of the struggle. Crushed by superior forces, fatigued, and without reserves or supports, the Turks were obliged to give way. In pursuing them the Russian tirailleurs crossed the first line of the Turkish position, and held their ground near Cerkovna and in the ravine, until they received orders to recross the river, and confine themselves to a distant fusillade.

While these incidents had been taking place upon the Russian left, Rifaat Pasha placed his battalions in column and made a feint of attacking the centre, but without actually engaging. General Tatishchef said in his report:—"The artillery alone opened fire upon these columns; as to the companies of infantry which occupied the intrenchments of the centre, under the orders of Colonel Sarantchew of the Rytsk regiment, they did not burn a cartridge, and their unexpected silence produced such an impression upon the Turks, that at more than 400 yards from our trenches they were seized with a panic and retired."

By seven o'clock in the evening the battle of Cerkovna, or Chairkoi, as it is called by the Russians and Turks respectively, had terminated, and the attempt of Mehemet Ali to turn Biela and penetrate as far as the Jantra, had failed. The two armies slept in the positions they had occupied in the morning. "Having regard to the lateness of the hour, the weariness of the troops, and above all, to the strength of the position occupied and intrenched by the Turks at Cerkovna, I did not pursue the enemy," said General Tatishchef in

his report; "but I immediately ordered Colonel Procop of the Perm regiment to occupy a wood, situated in front of the position, with six companies. The execution of this order met with no resistance on the part of the enemy."

The next morning a Turkish parlementaire was sent to request permission to bury the dead. This was immediately granted; 300 Turks had already been interred by the Russians; 100 bodies remaining in their lines were handed over to the Turkish burying parties, who on their side had already disposed of 400 bodies found in the space between the lines of the two armies—thus making up a total of 800 killed, with probably from 1500 to 2000 wounded. The Russians had, on their side, four officers killed and twenty-one wounded; eighty-four sub-officers and soldiers killed, and 391 wounded, one man missing, forty-two horses killed or wounded.

Incredible as the disproportion of the losses of both armies may appear, it is confirmed by impartial witnesses. One of these gave an explanation which, taken in conjunction with the fact that the Turks were the attacking and therefore the more exposed party, is in all probability correct, and in any case is worthy of mention. It seems that the 26th Division (of which the Perm and Viatka regiments formed part), like the Guard and all the troops fresh from Russia, was armed with the Berdan—a rifle carrying at least as far as the Turks' Peabody. The whole army might have been armed with this weapon in the previous April; but the Russian War Office decided that it was not advisable to deprive the troops at the beginning of a campaign of their accustomed weapon. This was only a specious objection, for the men would have had ample time, during their two months in Roumania, to become familiarized with the new arm; but, weak as it was, this argument triumphed, and the army of the Danube retained the Krinka rifle, which would only carry 800 yards. The Turks, who soon found out the great advantage they possessed over their enemy in this respect, were in the habit of calmly advancing to a point just beyond the range of the Russian rifle, and there opening a brisk fire with their Peabodys, to which the Russian artillery alone was able to reply effectively. The Turks began in the same way at Cerkovna; but instead of the calm in which they had been accustomed to carry on this exercise, they found themselves assailed by a

shower of balls much smaller but infinitely more deadly than any with which they had been previously acquainted. This unusual circumstance revealed to them the arrival of a reinforcement with a new weapon, the destructiveness of which their oriental imaginations no doubt greatly exaggerated. Then came hesitation, and finally, a precipitate retreat.

The result of the engagement at Cerkovna confirmed Mehemet Ali in his desire to return to his old positions on the Kara-Lom, especially as he knew that Osman Pasha had just been re-equipped and was less in need of assistance. The check he had sustained would help to justify his retreat in the eyes of the Pashas at Constantinople, who were urging him to advance. It is true, the check had not been decisive, since the Turks had retained their positions; but, as we have said, Mehemet Ali was in want of a pretext for retiring from Biela. He had certainly shown a lack of enterprise after Karahassankoi; but considering the circumstances in which he was placed, he should not be judged too harshly. He had succeeded in uniting a great portion of his army against different points; and he ostentatiously pitched his camps on the slopes of hills and manœuvred in sight of the Russians in such a way as to produce a very exaggerated idea of his strength. In reality, after Cerkovna he is said to have had less than 40,000 men available, of whom about a fourth were Egyptians, while he was aware that the Russian Guard had just reached the theatre of war. He thus calculated that his numerical inferiority, the bad quality of his troops, composed so largely of Egyptians, and his weakness in artillery rendered defeat almost inevitable. He knew, further, that the autumn rains had already destroyed the roads behind him, and that consequently a retreat after a defeat would probably degenerate into a disastrous rout across a broken country.

The order was accordingly given on the 25th of September for the retreat of the whole army; the garrison of Rustchuk, which had taken part in the general movement, evacuated Kadikoi and retired under the shelter of the forts; and Mehemet Ali slowly fell back upon the line from Kacelyevo to Popkoi and Yaslar. The weather was wretched; rain had completely saturated the roads, and guns, carriages, and ambulance waggons struggled and slipped in a sea of black sticky mud, so that the

infantry were constantly occupied in helping the horses out of bad places. The rear-guard, under Baker Pasha, retired step by step, covering the army in its retreat. As the Turks abandoned the positions conquered a few days before at the cost of so much blood, a panic took place in the villages to which the Mahomedan inhabitants had returned; and these unfortunate people, abandoning for the third time their half burnt dwellings, hastily harnessed their oxen or buffaloes, and followed the retreating battalions as well as they could. Under the coverings of the waggons the women crouched in the midst of their children, carrying their few clothes and the indispensable coffee-pot. On the pole sat the bronzed father of the family, gazing sadly on the fertile fields for which armies were contending. But everything must give place to military necessity, and the fugitives were often driven from the road to make room for the innumerable vehicles which follow an army to feed it, or to relieve the sick and wounded.

Thanks to the immobility of the Czarewitch, the retreat was successfully accomplished. The Russians had grown so accustomed to see the Turks appear and disappear on various points along their line, that it took some days to convince them that the whole army had retreated. When they made this discovery, they once more moved forward; and on the 1st of October the Russian outposts again found themselves in Polamartza, Opaka, and Ablava, along the west side of the Lom, occupying almost the identical positions they had held a month before, while the Turks were discovered strongly posted at Karahassankoi and Popkoi.

On the 2nd of October Mehemet Ali, returning from an inspection of his positions, received an official letter, on opening which he learnt that he was superseded by Suleiman Pasha, and recalled to Constantinople. Some of his generals had known for several days that Mehemet Ali was on the eve of a disgrace; but he himself, absorbed in his multifarious duties, had no idea of what was in store for him. He could, however, have been but little surprised, as he was well aware that his foreign origin would always be against him, unless he were able to cover it with the glory of a brilliant victory, which he had not been able to do.

His removal therefore did not create much surprise; but what appeared at first almost incredible, was the choice of his successor. It was notorious

that the failure of Mehemet Ali's admirably conceived plan of operations against the Czarewitch had been brought about to a great extent by Suleiman Pasha's disobedience to his orders, and disregard even of his entreaties, to cross the Balkans and take part in a combined movement against the Russians; and it was generally expected that the general, who had foolishly, and in direct contravention of his chief's orders, thrown away 20,000 men at Shipka, would have been summoned before a court-martial. Not at all. In a country of intrigue rewards are not obtained by merit, but by favour, and Suleiman Pasha was named Generalissimo.

We have already spoken of the jealousy he bore to Mehemet Ali, and may add that he detested all Europeans; so that his first step on assuming his new command was to send away all the European officers whom Mehemet Ali had called to his aid. Suleiman, in short, belonged to the "Old Turks," through whose influence he received such a high command instead of the punishment he deserved.

Mehemet Ali at once set off for Constantinople, without even an interview with his successor to explain the state of the army and its resources. Suleiman was, therefore, obliged to go into all these matters for himself, and must have felt the injustice he had been guilty of towards Mehemet when he saw how powerless the scanty resources at his disposal rendered him. The party at Constantinople who relied on the new Generalissimo for some bold and decisive blow were completely disappointed, for when Suleiman arrived at Rasgrad no alteration in Mehemet Ali's plans was found possible. His intrepidity could not make up for the feebleness of his means, and he rendered an involuntary tribute to Mehemet Ali by being obliged to continue his defensive policy.

Mehemet Ali received a welcome at Constantinople which consoled him somewhat for his disgrace. He explained the unfavourable conditions by which he had been surrounded, and complained especially of Achmed Eyoub and the Egyptians, more than 500 of whom were in hospital on account of mutilations self-inflicted to avoid military service. The Sultan appeared to regret having consented to Mehemet Ali's removal, and gave him a fresh appointment in Herzegovina, which he soon changed for the more important command of the army destined for the relief of Plevna.

As we have already said, Suleiman Pasha disappointed his admirers by maintaining the prudent defensive policy of Mehemet Ali. He found the Russian left too strong to be attacked in front. It rested upon the Danube—Pirgos being occupied and strongly fortified. Thence the Russian line ran along the elevated ridge to Trestenik, and then turning eastward, went to Damogila and across the Black Lom to Kacelyevo, describing an irregular triangle with Pirgos and Kacelyevo at the angles at the base and Trestenik at the apex. Pirgos is too close to the Danube to be turned, and it was also protected by batteries across the river. The line throughout to Damogila occupied a vantage ground, which allowed an attacking army no room to manœuvre. It followed a commanding crest, with a deep hollow devoid of cover lying close before it, into which the attacking force must have descended, the western ridge commanding the eastern all along. The defending force would have been under complete shelter, while the attack would be exposed when it topped the ridge; and as soon as it did so, must either proceed down the coverless hollow, to the assault of a most difficult position, stand still and be shrapnelled, or retreat. Suleiman Pasha being unwilling to risk an attack on these formidable positions, and finding the Russians indisposed to take the initiative, decided on a fresh disposition of his troops—the Kadikoi position being a most undesirable one, on account of the difficulty of obtaining sufficient supplies of wood and water. Three divisions of the Rasgrad Corps d'Armée—viz., those of Assaf Pasha, Nedjib Pasha, and Fuad Pasha—were concentrated on the heights between Kadikoi and the Lom, the movable columns of the Rustchuk army being encamped a little in the rear. Sabit Pasha's division occupied the horse-shoe behind Solenik, covering the road from Kacelyevo and the bridge over the White Lom, while the rest of the army held the old positions of Karahassankoi and Sarnasuflar, thirty miles distant to the south-south-east. On the 19th of October Suleiman sent Nedjib's and Fuad's divisions to Rasgrad, leaving only Assaf Pasha's division and the column of Mustapha Pasha on the old ground to cover the railway, from which he derived his supplies with so much greater facility than he could have done by bullock arabas.

Although, just before his rival's fall, Suleiman

had taunted him in a published despatch with having been ordered to attack Biela and not doing it, he showed so little inclination to renew the attack in which his predecessor had been checked, that the 2nd Division of grenadiers, which had at first been directed to join the Czarewitch, received counter orders, and went towards Plevna, where the Russians were just then concentrating all the forces they could spare, in order to surround Osman and his devoted army. From the commencement of October to the middle of November the armies in the neighbourhood of the Lom only came into contact with each other in reconnaissances, followed by more or less lively skirmishes.

It would be tedious to enumerate all these petty encounters, which were without the slightest strategic result; but a Russian reconnaissance, which took place on the 23rd of October near Kadikoi, was rendered note worthy by the death of Prince Sergius of Leuchtenberg, a nephew of the Czar, who was attached to the Staff of the Czarewitch, and had participated in several of the engagements along the Lom—showing great gallantry upon every occasion. According to the account in the *Moscow Gazette*, probably the most authentic description of this sad incident, the young prince, attended by his escort, had advanced as far as the left flank of the Russian line of skirmishers, which had for the moment ceased firing, and was just placing his glass to his eyes to watch the movements of the enemy, when he let it fall with a faint cry. Lieutenant-colonel Sander, who was standing by, immediately jumped off his horse to pick up the glass; but seeing the prince falling, ran up and succeeded in catching him in his arms. The young prince was dead; a chance shot, fired at an exceedingly long range, had struck him in the forehead, just above the right eye-brow, and penetrated to the brain. Prince Sergius, born in 1849, was the third son of the late Grand-duchess Marie, sister of the Emperor. Endowed with a peculiarly sensitive and sympathetic nature, he had gained a multitude of friends, both in society and in the army. His two brothers, Eugene and Nicholas, were also in the army. According to Russian etiquette, it was required that the prince should lie in state for a certain period; and the head-quarters' staff went twice a day for prayers to the little church where the body lay on an ordinary ambulance stretcher, and enveloped in his greatcoat. The remains were

afterwards taken to St. Petersburg, and interred with great solemnity.

The death in action of one of its members raised the Imperial family in popular estimation; for people in Russia were beginning to say that, while the rank and file of the army were sent to death by thousands, the princes took care to keep out of danger.

During the lull in active hostilities between the armies near the Lom, every nerve was strained on both sides in preparation for a winter campaign. The Turks received large stores of good warm cloaks, with which every man was soon supplied; and the troops were as quickly as possible housed in winter huts. These, of which eight were allotted to each battalion, were forty feet long, fifteen feet broad, and ten feet high—five feet in the ground, to economize material, and five feet above it. The elevation was of strong "wattle and dab," roofed with willow boughs laid on a wooden frame, over which was a layer of earth and Danube reeds. Each contained two stoves of mud and brick; six inches of wattle fenced off an eighteen-inch path down the middle, and the men lay on either side. The excavated earth was banked up against the wattle outside. A layer of willow boughs, covered with one of straw, formed the beds. The framework of the huts was fastened with wooden treenails, and it was the pride of the officers that this mode of winter shelter did not cost the Government a farthing—the wood, reeds, and withes being cut and fashioned by the soldiers, who also made the bricks for the stoves, shaped the treenails, and excavated the hollows. The huts were put together with great neatness, and considerable ingenuity was displayed in the arrangement of the descending entrance. As residences they were warm and proof against any weather, and more comfortable by far than an average labourer's hut in Asia Minor.

The idea was prevalent in Europe that as the great majority of the Turkish army had come from Asia, they would not be able to endure the cold winter of Northern Bulgaria nearly as well as the Russians. But this proved to be an illusion. The men who filled the ranks of the Turkish army had been mostly accustomed to a hardy open-air life among the highlands of Asia Minor, and were well used to cold. The theory that poor food and exposure would be more fatal to the Turk than the enemy's fire, was disproved by the

low sick rate in the Ottoman army. The Turkish soldier had, in fact, been used to "rough it," and the *yek simit* or hard biscuit, usually served out to the army, was at least as good bread as that which he would have had to eat at home. He was generally patient, and seldom murmured as to the quality or quantity of his rations. To provide against the difficulty of getting meat in the winter near Rustchuk, 4000 sheep and 800 oxen were cut up and cooked by a simple process, and soldered up in tins for the use of the garrison. Beef sausages, too, which are a favourite article of winter food in Bulgaria and may be seen in festoons round every house in town and country drying in the wind during autumn, were manufactured in large quantities for the use of the army.

When the cold weather first set in, it found the Russian soldier with no more clothing than he carried in the summer; only the Guards and a few of the new troops had a thick woollen jersey. The infantry soldier had only his greatcoat to wrap himself in at night, and he had to make this serve both for bed and covering. Sometimes by huddling three or four together, and making a common nest, they managed to sleep; but the greater part of them simply lay awake, or walked about until the higher temperature of the morning allowed them to sleep. Great efforts were at once made to defend the men against the assaults of the winter. Immense quantities of sheep-skin coats were provided as speedily as possible, comfortable wooden hospitals were erected, and the soldiers were set to work to prepare their winter quarters, which were constructed as follows:—A rectangular pit, about three feet in depth, was first dug, and then round saplings were placed with their lower ends upon the longitudinal edges of the pit, and the upper ones lashed together to the ridge of the roof with withes of tough wood. These rafters were about a foot apart, and were covered with a mat made of twigs and branches interwoven in a very effective manner. Upon the mat a foot of earth was thrown, the gable ends were covered with mats and earth like the sides, and the winter hut was complete. It had a fire-place and chimney in one corner, and was tolerably comfortable, so far, at all events, as warmth was concerned.

About the middle of November the critical situation of Plevna decided the Porte upon ordering Suleiman Pasha to abandon his policy of inaction, to move upon the Jantra, and try, cost

what it might, to stretch a hand to Osman Pasha to help him out of the net which had been thrown around him. The engagements between the advanced posts became more frequent and obstinate in character, especially one on the 15th at Kacelyevo, and another on the 17th at Slataritza, where the Turks tried to intrench themselves but were finally dislodged by the troops of the 11th Corps.

On the 19th a still more serious engagement took place on the Lower Lom. Sixteen battalions of Turkish infantry sallied forth from Basarbova, crossed the river by three bridges, and attacked the Russian left at Pirgos on the Danube, and on the road from Rustchuk to Biela. After an obstinate resistance, the two companies occupying Pirgos were obliged to fall back on Metchka, three miles to the rear. The Turks were conquerors in the first part of the day, but in the evening a brigade of the Russian 12th Corps marched from Metchka and drove them back to the other side of the Lom.

The Russians were unable to divine the object of these forced reconnaissances at points so distant from each other along the extended line of the Turkish army; and Suleiman Pasha, having thus thrown them off the scent, resolved to surprise them by a sudden attack. He ascertained, from the results of the reconnaissance on the 19th, that the lines of the Czarewitch were somewhat weak near the Danube; and he conceived the plan of dislodging the forces of his adversary from Metchka and Trestenik, getting possession of the bridge at Balin, and by a bold march, menacing the communications of the whole Russian army. Assaf Pasha was charged with carrying out this operation.

Metchka was defended by a brigade of the 12th Infantry Division, under General Tsitliadzeff, with sixteen guns; and Trestenik by General Fofanoff's brigade, the Bessarabian regiment belonging to the 33rd Division, and forty-four guns. These troops were commanded by Lieutenant-general Baron Firks, commander of the 12th Division. The three other regiments of the 33rd Division were placed in reserve with thirty-two cannon—one regiment being at Damoguila, another at Obirtenik, and the third at Tabachka. The foreposts, which formed a semicircle from Pirgos to Kochava, passing through Gol-Tehesme and along a height opposite Krasna, were supplied by the 12th Cavalry Division, under Lieutenant-general Baron Driesen.

On 26th November Assaf Pasha's force, consisting of about forty battalions, nine batteries, some regular cavalry, and 500 or 600 Circassians (altogether 30,000 infantry and fifty-four guns), crossed the Lom. It was divided into three columns. Salim Pasha commanded the right wing, and was to attack Pirgos; Ibrahim Pasha was in command of the centre, with orders to attack Metchka and support the attack upon Trestenik, which was to be conducted by Osman Bey with the left wing. Hassan Pasha commanded the reserves. The principal effort was to be made against Trestenik.

At eight o'clock in the morning, the Turks attacked all along the line, and the Russian foreposts quickly gave way, except at Gol-Telesme, where two battalions made a splendid resistance. Salim Pasha took Pirgos, and, pushing before him the Russian troops whom he had forced out of it, advanced rapidly, so as to turn Metchka by passing between it and the Danube. An assault delivered by him upon General Tsitliadzeff's left flank having been repulsed by the bayonet, Ibrahim Pasha attempted a front attack with his column. The Russians were intrenched, not in Metchka itself, but a little behind it. The Turks possessed themselves of the village and intrepidly made a second assault, with no better fortune than before; and having sustained material losses, they now ensconced themselves in the ditches round Metchka, to await the results of the attack upon Trestenik.

General Tsitliadzeff then received a message from Baron Firks, informing him that this latter place was in a very critical position, and urging him to disembarass himself as quickly as possible of the forces attacking his position, so as to be able to go to the assistance of the right. The General accordingly resolved to take the offensive. The Azoff regiment, led by its colonel, fell upon the Turks in Metchka, bayoneted some, and drove out the rest. Ibrahim retired towards Trestenik; Salim rallied his troops upon a height between Metchka and Pirgos; but, taken in flank by the Odessa regiment and in danger of being driven into the Danube, he fell back on Pirgos, where he attempted to make a fresh stand. The Russians, however, gave him no time, and about mid-day, pursued by a lively fusillade, he finally took the road to Rustchuk without attempting any further resistance.

Tsitliadzeff, without continuing the pursuit or

even attempting to establish himself in Pirgos, was obliged to immediately recall all his troops to Metchka, where they took up their former positions. Ibrahim Pasha, after being repulsed, had taken up fresh ground between Metchka and Trestenik, and then, profiting by the absence of most of the troops of the Russian left in pursuit of Salim, had advanced by the ravines situated between the two villages, and begun to outflank Tsitliadzeff's left. The latter sent against him the Odessa regiment, which had just returned; and having thus parried the turning movement and assured his position, he was able to detach a couple of fresh battalions to the aid of the Trestenik force, whose situation had by no means improved.

We must now describe what had been taking place on that side. Almost at the same moment that Salim and Ibrahim assailed Metchka, Osman Bey attacked the outposts of the Trestenik position at Gol-Telesme. This post was occupied by two battalions of infantry, which were supported by the Akhtyrsk hussars and two cannon. After opposing a long and gallant resistance to the efforts of ten battalions of Turks and twenty-two pieces of artillery, the little force slowly retreated upon Trestenik with a loss of nearly 300 men. During this struggle the main body of the Turkish column turned the right of the Russian outpost, joined Ibrahim Pasha, who had taken up a position between Metchka and Trestenik, and attacked the latter place. The day, for the moment, seemed lost to the Russians; the Turks had placed several batteries of long-range guns on the heights of Gol-Telesme, and they had united nearly forty battalions—that is, their whole force—to deliver the attack. "There were altogether in the Trestenik position," said the report of the Grand-duke Vladimir, commander of the 12th Corps, "five battalions, of which the two that had formed the advance-post had already suffered heavy losses. The interval between Metchka and Trestenik was open, and the left flank of the latter position feebly occupied. The enemy, profiting by his numerical superiority, enveloped Trestenik on both flanks, keeping up all the time a heavy concentrated fire which covered with a rain of balls, not only the positions, but even the distant bivouacs. At the same time as the enemy attacked our right flank and centre, they descended into the Trestenik ravine and began to escalade the heights and turn our extreme

left. There was not a single place in the village of Trestenik which afforded shelter from the balls and shells. The ambulances had to change their position, all the population had fled, the bringing up of ammunition and cartridges became difficult, not only on account of the rain of bullets and shells, but also because of the mud, which made the steep slopes and sharp descents of the Trestenik ravine extremely difficult; and meanwhile the need of cartridges was being more and more felt. Our artillery did its best to restrain the enemy: but as they advanced by a series of lines of skirmishers, they continued to make progress, in spite of the violence and accuracy of our cannonade."

In addition, the weather was frightful. It was bitterly cold, an icy rain mingled with snow was falling, and the wind, very strong all the morning, redoubled its violence after mid-day and beat like a hurricane against the soldiery. Happily for the Russians, General Tsitliadzeff had by this time finished with Salim Pasha, and was able to send his brigade against Ibrahim's flank; then the position of Trestenik received one after another a succession of reinforcements. Until half past three the battle remained undecided. The Turks delivered two successive assaults, which the Russians repulsed with the bayonet; but they were unable to shake off the masses of the enemy which pressed them on three sides. The Turks after this repulse did the same as their comrades had done at Metchka—installed themselves in the ditches around the village, and in some places made abattis of trees behind which they sheltered themselves.

At half past three, Baron Firks, who was conducting the Russian defence, judged that the moment had come for an energetic effort, and accordingly gave all the troops engaged, those at Metchka as well as at Trestenik, the order to assume the offensive. The Turks were thrown back; their right, attacked at the same time in front by several battalions and on the flank by others arrived from Metchka, gave way and drew all the army in their train. Moreover, to continue the combat had become almost impossible. The ground had become so softened that the men sunk in it almost to their knees, and the artillery was unable to manœuvre. Assaf Pasha therefore directed his troops to recross the Lom, and the retreat was conducted in good order under the protection of the reserves deployed upon the Gol-Tchesme plateau. The Russians made no attempt to harass

them. In fact all the troops had been engaged, and were already greatly fatigued. Sulciman Pasha in his despatches gave his loss at 1200 men. The Russians in theirs admitted 760 men placed *hors de combat*.

His attack on the extreme left of the Russian army having failed, Sulciman Pasha then changed his plan. Presuming that the Czarewitch would draw troops from the other parts of his line to reinforce that which had just been attacked, he now resolved to strike a blow at the extreme right. Frequent reconnaissances had been made on this side by the Turks, either with detachments from Osman-Bazar or with columns which came from the other side of the Balkans by the Passes of Slivno and Tivarditza. On the 19th November particularly, 5000 infantry and 1000 horse had shown themselves in front of Mareni, and had obliged the Russians to deploy and expose the strength of their forces. Sulciman thus learnt that Tirnova, the central point which linked together the various fronts of the Russian army in Bulgaria, was poorly covered on this side; he hoped, therefore, to overwhelm the detachment at Elena by force of numbers, then penetrate as far as Tirnova, and so oblige Radetzky's corps to abandon the Shipka, call to him the Turkish force which had been detained so long before that Pass, and entirely changing the face of the war, draw against himself the whole of the Russian forces—thus affording Osman an opportunity to complete his own deliverance by an opportune sortie.

In order to strengthen his prospects of success he, as Generalissimo, sent orders to Mehemet Ali to combine operations with him by attacking Gourko, and pushing on towards Lovatz, while he himself was taking Elena. In the beginning of November the Russians had only one regiment of infantry at the latter town; but when they learnt that Sulciman was concentrating considerable forces around Osman-Bazar, a second regiment was sent there, and the garrison then consisted of a brigade of the 9th Infantry Division, a regiment of dragoons, and three batteries of artillery—altogether about 6000 men, with eighteen guns. An advanced detachment of these troops occupied a strong position in front of Elena, with Mareni as its centre, and covering both the Slivno and the Tivarditza road.

Sulciman skillfully concealed his attack; and

when on the 3rd of December he arrived at Ahmedli, less than eleven miles from Elena, with 20,000 infantry, 8000 Circassians and Bashibazouks, and twenty guns, he took the Russians completely by surprise. In the night of the 3rd the Russian cavalry outposts perceived the fires of the Turkish camp and gave the alarm; but even then no one suspected the real strength of the force advancing upon them. General Dombrovsky, who commanded at Elena, however, sent word to General Sviatopolk-Mirsky, Commander of the 9th Division, and asked for reinforcements.

On the 4th December, at half-past six in the morning, the Russians heard two cannon shots in the direction of Ahmedli, and soon after their outposts brought in the intelligence that dense masses of Turks were moving towards Marení. This position was occupied by two battalions of the 31st Sievsk infantry, four pieces of horse-artillery, and three squadrons of dragoons.

At the first sound of cannon all the trenches were occupied, and the detachment prepared to receive the enemy. A thick chain of Turks showed itself on the ridge of heights, opposite the centre and left of the Marení position, and was supported by dense columns of infantry and several hundreds of mounted Circassians. Soon after a Turkish battery of twelve long-range guns was established on a height, and opened fire against the Russian centre. The Russian infantry received the first attack bravely, and opened a heavy fire all along the line. Contenting himself with a demonstration against the centre, Suleiman sent his attacking columns to the left of Marení. Lieutenant-general Oulogaia, of the Sviesk regiment, was killed in the *melée*, and a cannon dismounted. While the Russian left was being severely tried, Suleiman threw some fresh troops upon the right of Marení with orders to turn it. After two hours of unequal contest, and although they had received a reinforcement in the shape of a battalion of the Orel regiment, whose leader was wounded just as he reached the field of battle, the Russians were obliged to yield their positions and fall back fighting upon Elena. In order to cover this retreat, Colonel Klevesahl, commander of the Orel regiment, placed himself at the head of the battalion which had just arrived, and led a bayonet charge against the Turks, who were trying to turn Marení by the right. This bold effort was unfortunate; the Turks gave way for a moment before

the impetuosity of the Russians; but the Circassians speedily enveloped the assailants, who had nothing left but to sell their lives dearly.

"Colonel Klevesahl," said an eye-witness, "was hit in the leg; but paying no attention to his wound, he went on fighting, for it was a desperate struggle, in which the colonel of the regiment himself had not a minute's truce. A revolver in each hand, the heroic leader performed prodigies of valour, but, receiving a second wound, fell from his horse, and, placed on an ambulance stretcher, was being carried off the field, followed by several other wounded officers, when the Turks threw themselves upon the group, killed the bearers, finished several of the wounded, and were about to do the same by the colonel. But struck with his brilliant uniform, for he still wore that of the Guard from which he had just been transferred, they thought they had taken an officer of very high rank, and lavished attention upon him." Only one officer and a few soldiers succeeded in forcing their way through the enemy and rejoining the detachment; all the rest of the battalion were either killed or taken.

General Dombrovsky, informed of the disaster, immediately sent all his reserves to the assistance of the Marení detachment, and at the same time he instructed Colonel Jirjinsky to take command. Inspired by the words and the example of the colonel, the soldiers once more threw themselves against the Turkish line, which swayed and bent before them; but courage could not avail against the masses of fresh troops with which Suleiman constantly renewed his attacking columns. Almost surrounded and crushed by sheer numbers, the Russians were obliged to resume their retreat, obstinately contesting every inch of ground.

By mid-day the detachment had been completely forced back into Elena, where General Dombrovsky had already recalled all his small outposts to prevent their being surrounded and cut off by the enemy. The Elena position had been well fortified in advance, and the Russians counted upon being able to make a very prolonged resistance there. It was occupied by seven fresh companies, who were placed in the advanced trenches, while the detachment driven in from Marení occupied the second line. A height on the left was occupied by nine guns, and one on the right by fifteen.

At ten in the morning (December 4) Suleiman sent some columns to make their way into the mountains between Slataritzza and Elena, so as to close this way of retreat to the garrison. When the Marení detachment had been driven in upon the main body, Suleiman had ordered his left wing to skirt Elena and occupy the road between that place and Tirnova, so as to completely surround the Russians. All these dispositions were well conceived, and showed that Suleiman had carefully studied recent actions in which the Russians had frequently made successful turning movements, and wished to imitate them. But, unfortunately for him, the Russian officers were wiser than the Turkish, and would not allow themselves to be surrounded, so that the operations of the Turkish General had not all the effect which he anticipated from them.

When Dombrovsky perceived the Turkish columns, accompanied by several hundred Circassians, moving upon his rear, he sent three squadrons of dragoons and a couple of guns to encounter them and prevent their cutting off his retreat. The dragoons made several brilliant charges; but overwhelmed by superior numbers, and having also to operate upon ground impracticable for cavalry, they could not succeed in arresting the enemy's advance.

As his turning movement developed, Suleiman gave orders to renew the attack along the whole line, and a desperate struggle ensued all round Elena, where the hail of Turkish projectiles made gaps, more and more numerous, in the Russian ranks. At half past two, the columns who were turning the town by the north made their appearance on the heights on the side of Slataritzza, and brought four field pieces into position, with which they were able to enfilade the whole of the Russian position. The Russian companies thinned every moment; five of their guns on the left flank were soon left without a single horse, and four more on the right flank lost three-fourths of theirs; while two of the guns, in command of Lieutenant Perlik on the extreme left, lost all their artillerymen. Nevertheless, this brave officer held his ground for a long time, replacing his gunners by infantry men, until only three horses were left—not enough to carry off his guns.

While the Russian ranks were visibly thinning, those of the Turks were incessantly reinforced. Suleiman Pasha, feeling that victory was in his

grasp, engaged all his reserves, so as to thoroughly complete the envelopment of Elena. At three o'clock his troops were already penetrating into the town in the rear of its defenders, and it became evident that it was untenable. After a desperate struggle of eight hours the Russians were on the point of being completely turned. Then, to preserve the handful of men still left, and seeing that his last way of retreat would otherwise be immediately cut off, General Dombrovsky at last gave the order to retreat to the position at Yakovitsa. The artillery only succeeded in carrying off fifteen guns, being obliged to abandon nine which had, however, lost nearly all their men and horses. The breech-pins and sights had been previously removed; but as most of the men carrying them were killed during the retreat, this precaution proved of little avail.

Prince Mirsky, commanding the 9th Division, on forwarding General Dombrovsky's report to the Commander of the 11th Army Corps, under whose orders he was temporarily placed, gave the following reasons for his prolongation of a struggle, obviously hopeless, to the point of risking the loss of nearly all his artillery:—

"It must be taken into consideration that the artillery, having lost 132 horses during the eight hours' combat, were left absolutely without the means of carrying off all their guns, of which, too, a considerable number were dismounted. The imperious necessity of prolonging the struggle as long as possible, and not yielding a foot of ground without hard fighting, was evident; for the only way of retreat—the defile of St. Nicolas, four miles long—was completely blocked up by the inhabitants flying from Elena and its environs. It was important then, above all things, to gain time, in the hope of reinforcements coming up, and to maintain the struggle until nightfall, so that the enemy might not crowd his handful of brave men into the defile, which would have infallibly led to the loss of the whole detachment. It is my duty to state that this task has been accomplished with unexampled coolness and *sans froid*, which certainly arrested the masses of Bashi-bazouks and Circassians ready to fall upon the rear of our detachment, in order to annihilate it completely on the least symptom of disorder in the ranks. Thus, six battalions of infantry, and four squadrons of cavalry, having sustained an eight hours' combat against an enemy five times their superior

in number, with a loss of a third of their effective in men (1807), and half their officers (52) placed *hors de combat*, delayed the advance of the Turks, and prevented their penetrating into the defile, beyond which lay a road open and undefended as far as Tirnova."

The retreat was by no means easy, for it was necessary to pass under the fire of a detachment of Turkish infantry which occupied the heights on the right, and also to repulse the attacks of 3000 Circassians which incessantly harassed the flanks and rear of the Russians. The first thirteen guns succeeded in passing; but the Turkish horsemen succeeded in capturing the other two, making a total of eleven taken that day.

To cover the retreat, General Dombrovsky ordered a last charge of the dragoons, which checked the audacity of the Circassians. The detachment continued its march in good order; the thirteen guns saved were able to occupy, about five o'clock, the batteries of a fortified position prepared in advance; and about eight o'clock the infantry, having collected their wounded, also arrived in good order at the Yakovitsa position, and undiscouraged, occupied the trenches and rifle-pits in readiness to receive the enemy again. But the Turks abandoned the pursuit, and made no further attack that day.

As stated in the passage of the report we have quoted above, the losses of the Russians were enormous—about 1600 men and 50 officers killed or wounded, and nearly 250, including four captains and a colonel, taken previously. They had lost besides 200 horses, 11 guns, seven ammunition waggons, and a large quantity of cartridges. Suleiman Pasha, on his side, had 2000 men killed or wounded.

Next to the sanguinary repulse inflicted upon the Russians before the redoubts of Plevna, the victory of Elena was the most brilliant success gained by the Turks in Europe during the whole war. But unfortunately for them, it was not followed up. Suleiman Pasha, although able to plan it, did not know how to profit by it.

We have mentioned that General Dombrovsky, as soon as he was attacked, sent to ask for reinforcements. The Yakoutsik regiment, which was encamped at Drostirevo, a few miles from Slataritz, was despatched at one o'clock, and reached Slataritz about four. After a few minutes' rest, it started on the twelve miles' march to Elena.

Some time after nightfall it arrived a mile from that town and saw a large number of camp-fires, which were presumed to be the Russian bivouacs, and the regiment marched on, right into the Turkish lines. A few shots were fired, after which the Russians retreated much quicker than they came; the Turks, who might have surrounded them—unconscious of their opportunity—having allowed them to escape. When the regiment reached Slataritz the next morning the same thing again happened, and it found itself a second time in the Turkish lines. After its departure, on the previous night, a column 10,000 strong had arrived by another road and occupied the village.

Master of Elena and Slataritz, Suleiman held, so to speak, the two keys of Tirnova. A successful front attack upon Yakovitsa, and a well-executed turning movement from Slataritz, might have placed him in possession of the town. He attempted nothing, however, although he had forces superior to those which the Russians could oppose to him, since they only had two divisions and a half in the neighbourhood available for the defence of Tirnova. Whatever may have been the reasons for his lack of audacity, they cost him all the fruits of his victory. On December 5 he contented himself with some trifling demonstrations against Yakovitsa; and on the morning of the 6th Baron Dellingshausen, commander of the 11th Corps, brought up a division to the aid of Prince Mirsky. In passing Scheremet he had detached the Perm regiment to unite with the Yakoutsik regiment, previously mentioned, in retaking Slataritz. These two regiments attacked on the 6th, dislodged the Turks, and pursued them along the Bebrova road.

The same day the bulk of the Turkish forces attacked Yakovitsa about two in the afternoon; but the arrival of reinforcements had become known. The attack was languid, and by three o'clock the fight was over. The next day, learning that the detachment advancing on the Bebrova road was menacing his rear, Fuad Pasha, whom Suleiman had left in command of the Turkish forces, retired to Elena; and a few days after (on the 14th December) hearing of the fall of Plevna, he evacuated the town—but not without having first set fire to it—and retreated to Osman-Bazar.

Having failed in his attempt to surprise Tirnova, Suleiman Pasha reverted to his original idea of forcing the lines of the Czarewitch near the Danube,

and cutting the communications of the whole Russian army by gaining possession of the bridges across that river. As soon as Elena was taken, he had returned to Kadikoi to prepare a fresh attack against the Russian 12th Corps. For that purpose he collected considerable forces, called up all the troops available from Silistria, Rasgrad, Solenik, and Turtukai, and thus formed, with the garrison of Rustchuk and the troops encamped at Kadikoi, the most imposing Turkish army that had appeared upon a battle-field in the valley of the Lom; it comprised over sixty battalions of infantry, or more than 40,000 men. Fazli Pasha, who had been commander of the Soukhoun-Kaleh expedition, was intrusted with the attack, in place of Assaf, disgraced in consequence of his failure on the 26th November.

On the 10th December a strong detachment crossed the Lom, and proceeded against the Russian advance-posts with the object of feeling their strength. Suleiman Pasha conducted the reconnaissance in person, and pointed out the positions which the troops were to occupy on the day of battle and the direction the attacking columns were to take. In the afternoon the detachment returned to Rustchuk. The next day the Grand-duke Vladimir became aware that he was about to be attacked a second time; thirty-eight Turkish battalions crossed the Lom during the day, and thirty more came out of Rustchuk and concentrated under the walls of the town.

Suleiman Pasha hoped that the Russian lines would be weakened by the despatch of troops towards Elena. As a matter of fact, however, the positions of Metchka and Trestenik were held much more strongly than on the 26th November. The whole of the 12th Corps had been distributed between these two points, and it had for reserves the 2nd brigade of the 35th Infantry Division belonging to the 13th Corps. As before, General Tsitliadzeff commanded at Metchka, and General Pirks at Trestenik, with General Fofanoff as second in command. In addition, one of the monitors captured at Nikopol had taken up a position opposite Metchka and rendered great service, as also did the batteries at Parapan on the Roumanian bank. At eight in the morning of the 12th December, the latter fired a couple of shots to announce that the Turks were about to attack, and soon after the Russian fore-posts began to give way before the first lines of skirmishers. About

ten o'clock the Turks established twenty guns on the heights between Pargos and Metchka, and a furious duel commenced between them and the Russian batteries posted behind the latter village. Protected by the fire of their artillery, the Turks advanced in thick lines against Tsitliadzeff's left and centre, having strong reserves behind them. Descending the heights, they engaged bravely in the ravine, but were received by a violent artillery fire which compelled them to retire. Having received reinforcements, they renewed the attack, but were a second time repulsed. Reinforced a second time the, Turks placed themselves in echelon on the slope of the heights they occupied, and thus formed five lines in terraces, as it were, which began to pour a torrent of lead, not only upon the advanced batteries, the trenches, and the reserves of the Russians, but even on the positions of their second line on the banks of the Danube.

After these tentative efforts against the left flank and centre, the Turks made three other attacks with much larger forces against the right flank, but with an equal want of success; and Suleiman's battalions broke themselves against the tenacity of the Russian regiments. Only some false attacks were made against Trestenik, and the Turks showed from the first that their main object was the capture of Metchka. The Grand-duke Vladimir was on a height opposite Trestenik, from which he directed the fight in person the whole day. The Czarewitch, also, who had come to watch the operations of the 12th Corps, followed the vicissitudes of the struggle from a neighbouring height.

The Grand-duke Vladimir resolved to repeat exactly the tactics which had succeeded so well on the 26th November; that is to say, pass to the offensive at a given moment. Not wishing to give the Turks too much time to prepare their attack upon Metchka and concentrate too great a force against this position, he yet wished to draw them farther forward in the ravines, and to take the offensive by advancing his right, leaving his left and centre in position for a time—his object being to fall first upon the left flank of the Turks, in order to turn them and cut them off from Rustchuk if possible.

When his reserves reached Trestenik the Grand-duke decided that his opportunity had arrived, and made the following dispositions for the attack:—The 2nd brigade of the 35th Division, supported

by the Ukraine regiment (of the 12th Division), was to march from Trestenik in the direction of Rustchuk, following the *chaussée*, in order to fall, by bringing forward its right wing, upon the Turkish left flank. The *chaussée* from Rustchuk approaches the Lom at Gol-Tchesme, and then makes an abrupt bend towards the Danube, its direction thus facilitating a movement against the flank and rear of the Turks who were threatening Metehka. The 2nd brigade of the 12th Cavalry Division, and a battery of horse artillery were directed to support and reinforce this attack.

The cavalry went into action first, and was severely handled by the fire of the Turkish infantry on the plateau of Gol-Tchesme; fortunately the 2nd brigade of the 35th Division speedily came to its aid, and stormed the enemy's shelter trenches, putting their defenders to flight with the bayonet.

When he saw that this brigade had succeeded in taking up a position on the flank and almost on the rear of Suleiman's army, and that its batteries were beginning to open fire, the Grand-duke Vladimir ordered General Timofeieff to advance the 2nd brigade of his Division (the 33rd) against the dense columns which had deployed between Trestenik and Metehka, and attacked the latter position. It was then nearly two in the afternoon. General Dokhtouroff, having explained to the regimental commanders the plan of action, appointed the Tiraspol and two battalions of the Bender regiment to make the attack. All the companies of the first line were, at a given signal, to spring simultaneously out from their rifle pits, and dash forward against the enemy.

At the first movement of the Russians, the thick chain of Turkish infantry opposite rose and poured in a murderous fire. The attacking force, however, moved bravely forward, descended rapidly into the ravine, and climbed the opposite slope under the fire of the Turkish skirmish-

ers; but the bulk of the Turkish forces could not or dared not show themselves on the crest, which was swept by the Russian batteries. The Russians reached this summit, and then discovered that the Turks were assembled in two masses at the bottom of the second ravine. Profiting by the impetus which the descent gave them, they threw themselves upon the Turks with the bayonet. The latter were unable to sustain the shock, and began to scramble up the neighbouring height in disorder. The Russian guns then concentrated all their fire upon them. Shells were bursting everywhere in the midst of the fugitives, who, abandoning their dead and wounded, hastily disappeared over the ridge.

Seeing the success of General Dokhtouroff's attack, the Grand-duke ordered a general advance of all the troops engaged. The Turks fled, suffering considerable losses, for they had to pass under a heavy fire to recross the Lom. They had, in fact, on their right, the 2nd brigade of the 35th Division, and on their left the Parapan batteries and the guns of the monitor *Nikopol*, commanded by a third son of the Emperor, the Grand-duke Alexis.

Thus terminated a day in which Suleiman had not given proof of any particular tactical skill, and a campaign in which he once more belied the reputation for ability and impetuosity which he had gained in Montenegro. The Turkish general had lost nearly 3000 men, while the Russians had only 780 *hors de combat*.

On returning to Kadikoi Suleiman found despatches informing him that his efforts to relieve Plevna could no longer be of any avail, as Osman Pasha had been a prisoner two days. From that time all that remained of the Turkish forces were to be recalled to the defence of Roumelia, which, as we shall see in the next two Chapters, more than 150,000 Russians were about to invade.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Influence of the Fall of Plevna on the Future of the Campaign—Disadvantages of numerical inferiority experienced by the Turks—The Government resolve to call out Christians as well as Muss-ulmans as a last resource—The Decree practically a Dead Letter—Russian Grand Council of War, and Plans of General Todleben and the Grand-duke Nicholas—Determination to carry the War immediately South of the Balkans—Turkish Council of War—General Klapka's advice to defend Adrianople rejected—Energetic Preparations of the Russians—Turkish request for European Mediation declined—Orders to the Russian Generals to press on at any cost—The material difficulties of the task undertaken by the Russians—Frightful Severity of the Weather—The "Kriwitsa" or Snow Hurricane—Suleiman Pasha's obstinacy—Description of the Balkans near Orkhanie—General Gourko decides on another Turning Movement—Plan for Crossing the Balkans in Winter—Difficulties encountered by the Troops—Terrible Scenes in the Passes—The Road a Solid Sheet of Ice—Novel methods of transporting Artillery—Six days to traverse ten miles—Severe Sufferings of the Soldiers—A Silent Army—Astonishment of the Turks at the appearance of the Russians—Appalling Sufferings of General Dandeville's Column in the Etropol Balkans—Fifty-three men frozen to death, and over 800 frost-bitten—Baker Pasha at the Taskesen Defile—Russian Preparations for attack on his Position—General Baker's Force, and its disposition—Battle of Taskesen on 31st December—Skillful movements of General Baker—Terrific Struggle—A critical moment—Final Assault of the Russians repulsed—The Turks victorious, but no rest for them—Flight to Petritsevo—Distressing Scenes on the Road—Capture of Petritsevo—Battle of Dolny-Bougarovo—Frightful Slaughter of the Turks—Advance on Sophia—Engagement at the Vrajleba Bridge—Coolness of General Gourko in crossing the Bridge whilst on fire—Description of Sophia—The weak point of its Defences—Panic in the City—Departure of the Turks—Excesses by Circassians and Bulgarians—Occupation of the town by the Russians—Six days' rest for the Soldiers—Extensive capture of Stores—Russian March on Tatar-Bazardjik—Dispositions of the Russian Troops—Statements of the Turks as to an Armistice—A day of Inaction—Skillful Operations of the Russians near Tatar-Bazardjik—An exciting Race—Occupation of Tatar-Bazardjik—Scenes in the Town—Flight to Philippopolis—Fording of the Maritza by the Russians in the middle of January—The Turks overtaken—Suleiman Pasha's tragical situation—His only chance of Escape—Dispositions of the Russians around Philippopolis—Evacuation of the Town and entry of the Russians—Brave conduct of a Squadron of Dragons—A Three Days' Battle—Bravery of the Turks under Fuad Pasha—Brilliant success of the Russians on their Night after severe fighting—Capture of eighteen guns—Skillful Arrangements of the Russians for the last day of the Battle—Incidents of the Struggle—The last hour of the Turkish Defence—Terrible Scene in the Belesnitsa Gorge—The Turks utterly routed and dispersed in the Mountains—Results of the Final Engagement—Recommencement of Hostilities by Servia—Irritation at Constantinople—Results of the Servian Campaign—Siege and Capture of the Fortress of Nisch.

As the arrival of the Turkish army at Plevna in the previous July had greatly modified the character of the Russian operations, so the surrender of that army exercised a decisive influence on the remainder of the campaign. It left the whole of western Bulgaria, with the exception of Widlin, open to the Russians; and it set free a veteran army accustomed to the best method of fighting the Turks, and which was able, in a short time, to force all the barriers of the Balkans by its own weight. The cause of Islam was now indeed to experience the disadvantage of numerical inferiority. This was only to be expected; for a population of 16,000,000 could not hope to resist, under otherwise equal conditions, the full force that could be exerted by a country which numbered 80,000,000 inhabitants. The experience of the great Civil War in America showed that a smaller population, however gallant, determined, or warlike, cannot sustain for an indefinite time the pressure of an army recruited from largely superior numbers, even if that army has to gain the knowledge of warfare in the open field, and to

educate its staff and departments under the fire of the enemy.

In previous chapters we have narrated the astonishing efforts made by Turkey to carry on the war. At the end of November the dearth of men was felt more severely than ever before. The army in Asia had been practically annihilated, and had to be reconstituted, while an attempt was also being made to form an army at Sophia for the relief of Plevna. The last *bans* of Moustaphiz had already been called out, and there only remained, as a supreme resource, the Civil Guard and the Christians. The Government then resolved upon a desperate measure, and ordered the mobilization of 150,000 men of the Civil Guard, composed both of Mussulmans and Christians, to form an army of reserve. On the 28th November Server Pasha addressed a circular to the Ottoman representatives at the various European Courts, describing this step, which he said, with considerable naiveté, "independently of its military object, would powerfully tend to strengthen the bonds of union between the citizens of the common country."

As regarded the Christians, however, the decree remained practically a dead letter; for they protested against the injustice of being called upon for military service after having been compelled to pay for exemption; and in the critical circumstances of the country the Government did not deem it prudent to force them into the ranks. As all Mahometans of suitable age had previously been called upon, it may be said that this last effort of the Turkish Government to form a new reserve was a complete failure, and that the war was concluded with the *debris* of the armies previously enrolled. In the middle of December the approximate number of effectives of these armies was as follows:—

	Men.
Army of the East,	60,000
Reshid Pasha's Egyptian Division opposed to General Zimmermann,	15,000
Garrisons of Silistria, Turtukai, Rustchuk, Shumla, and Varna, about	35,000
Shipka army,	30,000
Sophia army,	30,000
Garrisons of Widdin and Nisch, with Army of Observation in Old Servia,	30,000
Total,	200,000

Including about 30,000 men in Asia—at Batoum, Trebizond, and Erzeroum—there thus remained 230,000 men with the colours. From the beginning of the war about 75,000 men had fallen in battle or had been disabled by wounds and disease, and nearly another 75,000 had been taken prisoners. The loss of these 150,000 men was irreparable, for they were the best blood of Turkey. Half the present Danube army consisted of Moustaphiz or partly disciplined Asiatic volunteers; the Dobrudscha corps and the garrison of Varna were composed of Egyptians of questionable value; the Sophia army was made up almost entirely of raw recruits; the army in Old Servia had been raised by a *levée en masse* in the vilayet of Rossova; and the army of Shipka alone contained a large proportion of veteran soldiers.

Immediately after the fall of Plevna a grand council of war was held by the Russian commanders, to decide on what operations the various corps which had composed the investing army should be employed. It was at once agreed that the Roumanian army should not cross the Balkans, but that one part of it should be sent to relieve the Russian troops posted along their line of communications in Roumania, who would then be able to enter the theatre of war; and the remainder

should occupy the small towns and strategic points of western Bulgaria and join the Servian army, which had just entered upon the campaign, in besieging Widdin. Later on this last resolution was modified; the Roumanians alone undertook the siege, and all the Servian troops were sent into Old Servia, which Prince Milan was anxious to annex, and wished to conquer at all costs. As to the Russian troops, two plans were discussed with respect to them. General Todleben proposed that the winter should be spent in besieging the fortresses of the Quadrilateral, in order to cross the Balkans in the following spring; the Grand-duke Nicholas, on the contrary, was of opinion that the war should be immediately carried to the south of these mountains, in order to strike the final blow there. The former pointed out the severe winter which was just coming on; the difficulty of forcing the Passes blocked up with snow; the impossibility of guaranteeing supplies to an army on the other side of the Balkans, with roads that a snow-storm might any day render impassable; and the losses in men which the terrible frosts would entail. The Grand-duke urged as the advantages of his plan, that the Turks were demoralized, and should not be allowed breathing time to reform their armies, and raise intrenched camps beyond the Balkans like those which had just delayed the Russians so long; and that the cold would be less fatal to the men of the North than to the Turkish soldiers, who came from warm countries, and were badly clad. By a series of rapid blows, and by closely pressing the Turks, the Grand-duke said they might speedily terminate the campaign; while General Todleben's plan had the grave defect of prolonging it indefinitely. The Grand-duke ultimately carried the day, and, as we shall see, whatever may be urged against his plan, it was at least thoroughly successful.

It was then decided that all the troops which had taken part in the siege of Plevna should join those already upon the line of the Balkans, and that a simultaneous effort should be made to cross the mountains by all the Passes from Arab Konak to Svarditza. The troops which the Russians were thus preparing to throw into Roumelia consisted of the whole of the Guard—three divisions; the 4th, 8th, 9th, and 11th Corps, eight divisions; the 2nd, 3rd, and 24th Infantry Divisions, two brigades of chasseurs, the Bulgarian Legion, which had been completely reor-

ganized, and now comprised ten battalions; and the 2nd and 3rd Divisions of Grenadiers, which were to form the reserve—altogether about 170,000 infantry, with six divisions of cavalry, the brigade of Cossacks from the Caucasus, and more than 800 guns. To this number must be added the Servian army, which was to form the extreme right of the line of battle, and which consisted of 70,000 infantry, 3000 cavalry, and 250 guns.

The Turks also held a great council of war at Constantinople, to which General Klapka was admitted. The hero of Komorn advised the Sultan to think only of defending Adrianople, and to concentrate at that town all the available forces in the Empire. In his opinion 100,000 men might still be got together there—a force more than sufficient to impede the march of the Russians, and in case of defeat, make them pay dearly for their advance. Unfortunately for the Turks, this advice was not followed. Suleiman Pasha, who had embarked at Varna with 10,000 men to go and take the command of the Turkish forces in Roumelia, and who was present at this council, continued to play his part as the evil genius of Turkey, and secured the adoption of an opposite course. He resolved on defending the Passes of the Balkans; and clinging to these untenable positions, scattered his forces along the mountains, so that when the defiles were forced, the different detachments of his army were cut off from each other, and had no longer the resource of falling back upon Adrianople, which, as we shall see, was abandoned without resistance.

Suleiman knew not even how to profit by the respite granted him by the intense frost, which for a fortnight completely put a stop to the Russian operations. The Turkish army of the Quadrilateral, which was to enter Roumelia for the defence of the Balkans, arrived too late; and Fuad Pasha, who led it, marched just fast enough to reach Philippopolis in time to be crushed by General Gourko's army, in the middle of January. No concentration of troops had been effected, and there were only the 30,000 men at Shipka, the 30,000 at Sophia, and the 10,000 which Suleiman brought from Varna to stem the flood of Russian invasion which now began to pour over the Balkans.

No sooner was it resolved to carry the war across the mountains than the Russians, in spite of the advanced season, began to prepare for this

new campaign with great energy. All the siege *matériel* was sent to the army of the Czarewitch, which was commissioned to invest and besiege Rustchuk; General Todleben being sent to the assistance of the Czarewitch, as he had been previously to Plevna. But this was quite a secondary operation in the opinion of the Grand-duke Nicholas; and Todleben's request for a reinforcement of one division of the 11th Corps was refused, on the ground that the main object was the passage of the Balkans and the invasion of Roumelia.

The Plevna army was disposed in the following manner:—The 3rd Division of the Guard and the 9th Corps were sent to Orkhanie to reinforce General Gourko's army. The 4th Corps and the 3rd brigade of chasseurs were directed upon Shipka to reinforce Radetzky, and the two divisions of grenadiers were sent to Tirnova to serve as a general reserve for the Shipka army. The 2nd Infantry Division was posted at Tirnova to guard the lines of communication. During these operations, preparatory to crossing the Balkans, General Gourko was to make Orkhanie his base; and Radetzky, Tirnova. Sophia and Philippopolis were afterwards to become, in turn, the base of operations of General Gourko, and Jamboli that of the Shipka army. The objective of the two armies was to be Adrianople, where it was expected that the fate of the Ottoman Empire would be decided by a great battle.

All the necessary measures were taken in order that the question of re-victualling should not retard the march of the army, however rapid it might be. Immense supplies of provisions, transported by 11,000 carts and 5000 pack-horses, requisitioned in Western Bulgaria, were directed upon Orkhanie, so as to be ready to move on to Sophia as soon as the road was open and the town taken. Three battalions of sappers, reinforced by 6500 Bulgarians, were also engaged on the repair of the roads between Plevna and Sophia, and in the formation of a new and more direct route. The telegraph administration was ordered to prepare, with the utmost speed, the materials for laying a permanent telegraph wire between Plevna and Sophia, the field-telegraph lines being intended to keep up General Gourko's communications with Sophia when he should have passed that point. Similar measures were taken at Tirnova, where, however, they were less urgent, as before the



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